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49

Goutam Biswas	From the Depth of Darkness: Hermeneutical Knowledge through Literary Text	7
Probal Dasgupta	Translating Children's Literature as a Vector of Post National Pedagogies; The Case of Horvat's <i>Waitapu</i>	23
Jalal Uddin Khan	<i>The Arabian Nights</i> : A Modern Introduction	39
T. S. Satyanath	Commentary as Interpretation and Translation in Medieval Indian Representations	55
Maulik Vyas	Structural Divisions in Narrative Ecologies of Indian Literary Traditions	73
সুমিতকুমার বড়ুয়া	সাহিত্যিক প্রতিগ্রহণ: চর্চালব্ধ	89
Probal Das Gupta	Review of K. Alfons Knauth (ed.) <i>Translation & Multilingual Literature</i> <i>Traduction & Littérature Multilingue</i>	115
Sutanuka Ghosh	Review of Jasbir Jain (ed.) <i>The Writer as Critic: Essays in Literature, History and Culture</i>	125

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Goutam Biswas was Professor of Philosophy and former Pro Vice-Chancellor, Assam University, Silchar. He had worked extensively on the interface between Philosophy and Arts. We feel honoured to publish his paper and we mourn his passing away in November this year. Probal Dasgupta, Professor of Linguistics at the Indian Statistical Institute, is known to readers of this journal and his paper is a sequel to an earlier one entitled "Translating Fiction for Children: Pedagogy and the Post-National Imaginary" published in *JJCL 47*. *JJCL* has carried Jalal Uddin Khan's papers before. He is now Professor of English at University of Nizwa, Oman. T S Satyanath retired as Professor of Comparative Literature from the Department of Modern Indian Languages and Literary Studies, University of Delhi and is now Chairperson of the research group called Delhi Comparatists. Maulik Vyas teaches English at Christ College, Rajkot and Sumitkumar Barua teaches Comparative Literature at Jadavpur University. Sutanuka Ghosh teaches in the Department of English, Jadavpur University.

**FROM THE DEPTH OF DARKNESS:
HERMENEUTICAL KNOWLEDGE
THROUGH LITERARY TEXT**

Any theory of interpretation requires some methodological parameter envisaged in view of the speciality and nature of the text concerned. One can call it internal parameter because it does not necessarily question the possibility of a more general methodological proposition. Edmund Husserl's method of regressive enquiry into the origin of geometry or any of its theorems or a 'construction of fine literature' as revealing the essence or *eidos* of it within the realm of an intra-subjectively evidenced but non-repeatable experience provides a good example of this approach¹. But the limitations of this approach became obvious to Husserl and subsequently he opted for another methodological and conceptual aid for rendering the communication of the intra-subjective revelation at an inter-subjective level possible. The depth of the intra-subjective procedure in this case is unquestionable and it is combined with an epistemic rigour that ultimately led to the problem of its translation in the inter-subjective domain contributing to culture. Intuition that carries the inevitability of reason in case of geometry and mathematics for pinpointing its form becomes less rational and more experiential burdened with imaginational contents in cases of arts and literature. More pertinently, the universality of the essence of ideal objects such as mathematical objects cannot be equated with the specificity of the essence of aesthetic objects

which of necessity must describe unique patterns. Husserl did not make this distinction inasmuch as he equated the status of the enquiry into the origin of a theorem of geometry with that of a 'construction of the fine literature'. It is plausible to assume that he was not attentive to this distinction as it was not so important for him. For him what was important is the contemplative nature of consciousness in both the cases for delving into the depth of a text that defies conventional reality. But there is still another difference: In cases of interpreting a literary text or artistic image one seeks a direct flow of knowledge in its non-conventional sense, — knowledge not of what is the case in the world of facts, but knowledge of what *is* in a virtual (as different from the actual) order of existence. The *virtual* is not just the *possible*. It is more than that. It is parallel to the *real*. Following Husserl one can say that this knowledge flow, when written in natural and inter-subjectively communicable language, contributes to the specific culture and the history of that particular language. This distinction between intra-subjective and inter-subjective does not prevail so strongly in such instances. A language then becomes the language of truth in view of the alternative world order and knowledge system; the truth that it speaks then is transcendent of the truths available in the world of facts. In case of regressive enquiry into the origin of a theorem of geometry, the passage between intra-subjectivity and inter-subjectivity is conceived more with reference to the tension between ideal language and natural language. But in an enquiry into the origin and meaning of a literary work of art the inquirer is already in the domain of inter-subjectivity with all the constraints and limitations of natural language. The emergent task there is to change its depth and conventional bases. As Heidegger says, "The dialogue of thinking with poetry aims to call forth the *nature* of language, so that mortals may learn again to live with language."⁷

How then is interpretation possible? How do we know then which world a given literary text concerned i. speaking of and

vouching for? Is it really understandable on a common basis? Or is it so that each interpretation becomes a new addendum to the work impairing its so-called original status? How do we and how should we account for the difference that it makes to us in our daily life or our conception of the world? How can we connect different interpretations and multiple readings for an acceptable polyphonic world of differences, — differences that render life and world healthier by expanding our cultural vistas? I contend that each reading/interpretation of a text requires an extra-common yardstick to dig out its deep layers of meaning, thus unfolding gradually our relational or dialogical space shared with it. In this connection I propose to use the theme of darkness and/or blindness or darkness-blindness as extracted from some texts as the epistemic foundation suggested by the texts themselves for understanding and interpreting them. I glean the idea from Derrida's *Memoirs of the Blind*³ and Binodebehari Mukherjee's *Chitrakar*⁴. While I bank on Derrida's lectures more as the framework or hypothesis for construing my idea of an alternative hermeneutics and possible purview of knowledge, I choose Rabindranath Tagore's *Raja (King of the Dark Chamber)* and Binodebehari Mukhopadhyaya's *Kattamashai (Head of the Household)* which is the second chapter of his book *Chitrakar* as the texts to dwell upon as sources of a different knowledge paradigm. The fact that each text carries a new perception of the theme and the plot and tends to re-understand aspects of life and reality demands that its interpretation should not be fully controlled by criteria external to it. Knowledge of the text and knowledge of life and reality through it do not contest each other; on the contrary they are complementary to each other. This knowledge is hermeneutical in nature.

Hermeneutics can be defined as the theory of understanding a text through interpretation. Here it also includes a task of finding about the specific means for interpretation. Any abstract and general view of hermeneutics becomes insufficient when the text transgresses

the common perception of world, reality and values or even the common understanding of what the uncommon could be. Its concretization becomes an emergent task for the reader to understand life afresh and place such understanding for enrichment of his personal history. The obstructionist and generalist approach to hermeneutics then needs to be replaced with some open-ended or live methodology. I call it dialogical hermeneutics where the limit of language is acknowledged and due heed to silence is given to make interpretation more contemplative but de-centered from the subject's wishes and pre-suppositions borrowed from the commoners' world.

In the dark the self is even more lost for reaching out to the other not necessarily to depend but for constructing itself. If one goes blind in the course of one's lifetime, reference to a previous life with light becomes hazardous because memory alone cannot adequately explain any changed perspective beyond darkness outside one's self. If one is born blind it is not hazardous though strenuous to figure the world of light out there. An alternative stream of ideas is conceivable in both the cases if blindness-darkness and creativity go together. Knowledge is more sovereign here and it transgresses utility not for any stereotyped salvation through cancellation of what is experienced or the world that is created but for further nurturing this experience, this world as something *valued* with the whole of its being in conjunction with a total dilution and ambiguation of the subject-object dichotomy and a thorough destruction of servility in knowledge. The non-knowledge or un-knowledge becomes the epistemological target in this context. As Bataille says, "To know is always to strive, to work; it is always a servile operation, indefinitely repeated. Knowledge is never sovereign; to be *sovereign* it would have to occur in a moment. But the moment remains outside, short of or beyond, all knowledge. We know regular sequences in time, constants; we know nothing, absolutely, of the moment. In short, we know nothing about what ultimately concerns us, what is *supremely important to us*. The operation leaves off as soon as

sovereignty is its object.”⁵

Bataille further holds that we are in fact conscious of the moment, but ‘this consciousness is at the same time a slipping-away of the moment insofar as it might be clear and distinct, insofar as it is not a vague knowledge of oneself but knowledge of an object’, - knowledge that needs to catch up the object in duration beyond the present moment. This step towards consciousness of the moment is also a move from *knowing* to *un-knowing*, a de-categorizing of the entire scheme of knowledge for changing its very meaning. Somewhat in tune with K. C. Bhattacharyya, one can say that it is a move *from meaning to significance, from object-hood to the speakability* of what is experienced.⁶

Inadequacy of the institutional self of language is manifest while undertaking a hermeneutical task. But it is also an incorrigible fact that we cannot completely do away with it. Therefore it is necessary to transform it. But a transformed perspective already exists with the literary creation. Hence the point remains to transform the language of understanding it. No literary work signifies a flight from reality as such. But it offers a problematized version of it. A fringe of it is retained in the text to mark the history of its change and the furthering of the cultural memory of a linguistic community. Franson Manjali’s observation, though particularly for explicating Levinas’s standpoint, is noteworthy in this context : “In moving from meaning to work of art we notice that Levinas begins by stressing on the aspect of ‘completion’ in art. Art inevitably has its own formal structure of completion, and that is what makes it outside the immediately worldly concerns, makes it disengaged. And yet, art is not a going beyond towards a Platonic dimension of internal ideas. Art is disengaged, but the disengagement that art is associated with is not atemporal withdrawal; it concerns a different kind of time, a time that is of the nature of absence of time, a ‘meanwhile’ or an ‘interval’. Art’s disengagement is not beyond time but on the ‘hither

'side of time' ". For Levinas art means an obscuring, a 'descent of night, an invasion of shadow'. However Levinas does not explain the meaning of 'the descent of night' as a methodological metaphor and as self-conscious choice of the writer or artists in general for the reversal of reality as commoners with eyesight see it. But, like some other dialogical thinkers (in spite of differences amongst themselves), his contribution lies in freeing hermeneutics from the Gadamerian project of maneuvering the ontology of a work of art as absolutely estranged from human subjectivity.

But language *per se* is institutional by nature. How can one see then the unturned side of its face? The interpretative procedure must struggle with and dialogically encounter the visible in order to reveal the concealed face of both language and what it speaks of as *separable* though not *meanable* in the world of objects/facts/events/state-of affairs. This other dimension of language within language takes it away from its typical institutional nature. In other words this other dimension of language involves the subversion of the conventional character of language. An ontology of literary work of art is then possible. This is to venture into questioning the ontology of art that Gadamer attempts to envisage on the basis of a concept of art as nothing more than 'play'. For him the experience of art means to *be in the play, that is, in the mode of unfolding of the work of art through the play*. For Gadamer, the concept of subject-object encounter in the domain of aesthetic experience is rather a 'leveling process of aesthetic consciousness': namely, conceptualizing the art object as one standing over against a human subject. For Gadamer, "Instead the work of art has its true being in the fact that it becomes an experience that changes the person who experiences it."⁸ Hence unlike the dialogical thinkers on art and aesthetics, Gadamer does not speak of the *space between* the subject and art object, the space that itself has its own ontology and determines the ontology of the work. The work, in a sense, is paratopic upon

this relational space. The ontology of the reader/perceiver's self too is drawn from this relationality. The alternative realm of aesthetic experience is surely not a non-human world. Nor is it a realm bereft of language. It is only an alternative that one discovers through interpretation founded upon dialogue. What Gadamer does is simply a shifting of the primacy of the human subject to the play. He says, "Here the *primacy of play over the consciousness of the player* is fundamentally acknowledged and, in fact, even the experiences of the play that psychologists and anthropologists describe are illuminated afresh if one starts from the medial sense of the word 'playing'. Play clearly represents an order in which the to-and-fro motion of play follows of itself. It is part of the play that the movement is not only without my goal or purpose but also without effort. It happens, as it were, by itself. The case of the play --- which naturally does not mean that there is any real absence of effort but refers phenomenologically only to the absence of strain --- is experienced subjectively as a rhythm of relaxation. The structure of play absorbs the player into itself, and thus frees him from the burden of taking initiative, which constitutes the actual strain of existence."⁹ This position not only subverts the possibility of a dialogical hermeneutics but also limits understanding of the text and constrains the knowledge-flow from it. Alteration of subjective existence of individual due to understanding of a work of art is possible, but a neutral perspective outside the relational sphere of the subject and the work alone cannot be responsible for it. Nor can understanding be generated by it. Thirdly, the alteration in the subject or creation of subjectivity as such is not possible through such neutrality. Gadamer's contention speaks of absorption of the subject within the play, but it puts a question mark on the possibility of criticism and emancipatory performance of the subject in a future context crossing the bounds of a particular tradition. The idea of literary work as source of knowledge nurtures the possibility of knowledge of a *different* kind. This *difference*

is not only with regard to the work but also to one's own existence. A theme like blindness or darkness appears in an interactive mode of realization of the aesthetic subject and the world as a whole. The text concerned reveals the un-turned face of reality.

Rabindranath Tagore's *King of the Dark Chamber*¹⁰ (In original Bengali *Raja*) is a story of the insignificance, triviality and non-knowledge (from its angle) of the true self of one who is lost in the crowd of acts and figures, ornaments, plenitude, power and pomp. Darkness or physical non-visibility is a self-conscious choice of the author and the character of King in the play. On the one hand there the thirst of vision, glitter of the world and glitzy appearance of people blind the queen where she wants to locate her King. Her effort is all in vein as the King chooses to *be* in the dark. Before their defeat in a strife with the king, conversation among some warrior princes are noteworthy. They speak of truth being essentially founded upon physical perception but at the same time some doubt is cast on the proposition.

Kanchi: Everything looks inauspicious to the eyes of fear.
 Vidarbha: I fear none except Fate, before which courage is as futile as it is absurd.
 Panchala: Vidarbha, do not darken today's happy proceedings with your unwelcome auguries.
 Kanchi: I never take the unseen into account till it has become 'seen'.¹¹

Here the unseen is frowned upon as incapable of generating any knowledge. This it is in direct conflict with what transpired between the King and Sudarshana earlier in the play within the atmosphere of a deeper perception of beauty, life and truth. One should say that it is recorded in the dialogue (not just conversation) between the King and Sudarshana, the Queen in his dark chamber :

Sudarshana: Why do you not allow me to see you in the light?
 King: Do you wish to see me one among a thousand things?

Why should I not be the only thing you can feel in this darkness?

Sudarshana: But I *must*. I must see you -- I am longing for a *sight* of you.

King: You will not be able to bear the sight of me -- it will only give you pain, poignant and overpowering.

Sudarshana: Oh, how can you say so? I feel even in this dark how lovely and wonderful you are -- why should I be afraid of you in the light? But tell me can you see me in this darkness?

King: Yes I can.

Sudarshan: What is it that you see?

King: I see the darkness of the infinite heavens whirled into life and being in the form of a perfect body. And in that form, what aeons of thought and striving, what yearnings of limitless skies, what countless gifts of unnumbered seasons!

Sudarshana is amazed and finds it difficult to believe. But then the King says, 'your mirror cannot reflect them -- it dwindles you, limits you'.¹²

The dark chamber is chosen here as an alternative site, -- the site for dialogue and not mere conversation. It is a site for constructing another mind of Sudarshana and imaging the real self of the King. It is a mind that Sudarshana is not comfortable with but the mind that is not otherwise *known*. Darkness is *chosen* for a particular duration, -- till Sudarshana understands the meaning of it through a dialogic self-transformation and *sees* the King within that relational space. But this choice, to put it paradoxically, did not have any option. It started perhaps as a *means* but it entered into the being of the entire work in its particularity. As a result, at the end of the work Sudarshana's response to the King's call to the light was in fact a tribute to the darkness :

King: I open the doors of this dark room today -- the game is finished here! Come -- come with me now, come outside *into the light!*

Sudarshana: Before I go, let me bow at the feet of my lord of Darkness, my cruel, my terrible, my peerless one! ¹⁴

Darkness impairing the normal vision of a person is a necessity here so far as the particular theme of this work is concerned, — the theme that crosses the border of its thematic and becomes problematic but for which the truth of it would have remained concealed. The problematic of the play centers upon the inaccessibility to the truth of dialogue, love, beauty and togetherness in commonplace language that represents the most trivial and what the King refers to as a mirror that limits our being. Hence it offers a different thematic in the atmosphere of darkness. Darkness now becomes a part of the being of the work, as silence sometimes becomes the part of the being of language. Possibly no hermeneutical knowledge is complete without taking the specificities of a literary work into consideration and then envisioning a particular methodological standpoint in terms of them. The standpoint, however, remains as a potentiality to be applicable to the interpretation of other works as well, — of course in a different form which too needs to be discovered in the text and in the life of the writer/speaker and the reader/hearer. In another context darkness-blindness synergy impairs vision not for revealing negativity and inadequacies of what is *seen in the light*, but primarily for upholding a different world in a fully positive sense so much so that darkness becomes the prosthesis of light. Let me quote in this connection the following lines from Derrida's *Memoirs of the Blind* :

A hand of the blind ventures forth alone or disconnected, in a poorly delimited space; it feels its way, it gropes, it caresses as much as it inscribes, trusting in the memory of signs and supplementing sight. It is as if a lidless eye had opened at the tip of the fingers, as if one eye too many had just grown right next to the nail, a single eye of a Cyclops or one-eyed man. This eye guides the tracing or outline [*tracé*];

it is a miner's lamp at the point of writing, a curious and vigilant substitute, the prosthesis of a seer who is himself invisible.¹⁴

The passage started with a question, "What happens when one writes without seeing?" We may extend its purview by asking: "What happens when one paints or makes images without seeing?" *Memoirs of the Blind* can become *Memoirs of the blindness* as such owing to the convertibility of the former from its context-bound and person-specific methodological propositions for understanding its text and textual contents into a general methodological pattern. Benodebehari Mukherjee's autobiography is its instance. Self-realization of Benodebehari and, for that matter, that of any artist ushers in a deep existential culmination which is dynamic and indicative of possible trajectories of human life and culture. Benodebehari drew a blind man in his narrative. He did not just write it. He spoke of the blind man and imaged him through words irreplaceable. He imaged the whole being of the blind, not his body alone in insulation. He set this drawing in dialogue with the rest of the world of so-called normal vision.

Benodebehari's *Kattamashai* is a dialogical narrative. It tells something and it shares in telling. It encounters other beings in the world. It deepens the entire panorama of life to the extent that it finally becomes difficult to ascertain whether blindness-darkness is supplementary to the past images and life with sight or the past is supplementary to the blindness-darkness. It speaks of the knowledge of the blindness as such in terms of seeing the life and the world in a different light. What is this *different* light? It is perhaps the light through darkness, a world with light brought from across the blindness with a new meaning for being. Rudranarayan undergoes a change in his identity after he goes blind. A new knowledge flow enriches him, knowledge about his own self, other people and the entire reality. Any autobiography of literary worth is like that. But then it is an autobiography of a

unique kind, – autobiography of a practitioner in the field of visual art who goes blind. It speaks of a movement of life from 'a world of light' to 'a world of darkness' that, in the words of K. G. Subramanyan, 'had brought a radical change in the range and rationale of his perceptions'. Kattamashai thinks, "Everyone likes to look at his face in a mirror. Kattamashai too feels a strong desire to do so. He goes and stands before it to see his image. But enormous as the mirror is, and edged within an ornate frame, it throws back no reflections."¹⁵ To put its epistemological worth on record, the text, like any successful literary work, crosses the domain of particularities of an individual's life and presents us with an alternative type of knowledge system, which any reader of literary taste can glean. Here there is no language skepticism like that of a modernist: the meaning of each and every sentence in the text carries the conviction of the creator and his trust in the power of the words that he utters. It is possible because beyond the function of seeing, writing and working lies the consciousness of being an artist that 'break out of their siege'. This is a process of experiencing what one is endowed with and what one is not. A change in self-identity or a supplementary value to his continuous self makes *Kattamashai* realize: "The throbbing life of the world of darkness and its novel beauty has come within his grip. He has also won back his lost room."¹⁶

Both in Tagore's *Raja* and Benodebehari's *Kattamashai* there are two different and incommensurable dimensions of one's horizon. With Sudarshana of *Raja* there is light on the one hand and darkness on the other i.e., limits of perception on the one hand and limitlessness through a rejection of the metaphoric 'mirror'. Sudarshana's dialogic encounter with the King in the dark chamber takes her beyond the limits of the mirror and her posited being. With Benodebehari the mirror gains a metonymic meaning of the experience of *not seeing the face in the mirror of one's desire* but his being breaks through it for another self-identity which is not

simply a *rejoinder* to the past, but an alternative or *prosthesis* that shakes hands with it. His autobiographic narrative gains a fuller picture in terms of this shaking of hands. Hence the 'spirit of joy' or *Hladini* quenches his thirst that he never had earlier and goes away with a 'floral peal of laughter'. In the light of that laughter *Kattamashai* experiences a miraculous videographic sight of his past from the childhood: "The path runs over a wide field latticed with sun and shadow. At the end of the path *Kattamashai* sees with astonished eyes that blue canopy stretched from horizon to horizon. And under it Rudranarayan, sitting still as if painted in a picture."¹⁷ But the story does not end here. The light of the laughter soon gets covered with mist and 'a black dragon with a long slimy body pounces on *Kattamashai*' asking for everything from his 'treasure of form and beauty'. In a rather didactic mood the dragon creates a dialogic space :

Dragon: "What use is it to you to keep this heap of worn-out pots together?

Kattamashai: "If I throw away these collections of the years, I will become a helpless destitute.

Dragon: "Instead of holding on to this junk like a beggar, why can't you acquire new vessels, new beauty, and new life-sap?"

Kattamashai: "Where shall I find new life-sap and new beauty? Where shall I find new vessels for them?"

Dragon: "Well it is time for me to leave. I leave with you your stack of words."

Then taking his all, and leaving him like a destitute, the Dragon disappears.

A drum beats in *Kattamashai*'s heart. Then on his frayed and worn-out stack of words he floats away into a formless, colourless, limitless void.¹⁸

Blindness becomes a journey, ... a journey of Rudranarayan through conversion of his own self to the becoming of *Kattamashai* and from *Kattamashai* to an onlooker of the resigned life on

uncharted vistas. We may hope that the *formless* acquires a unique form in the hands of a blind artist.

The dialogical hermeneutics contests the tension between meaning of being i.e. ontology, and linguistically as an essential component of understanding a text. In the history of hermeneutics we see that despite this tension an interweaving takes place : "In spite of all the emphasis Heidegger places on language, especially in the later phase of his thought, he regards interpretation primarily from the point of view of meaning of Being; in spite of all the emphasis that Gadamer places on ontology, interpretation is thought primarily from the point of view of language."¹⁹

Dialogical hermeneutics emphasizes an attitudinal shift which covers both the components so that the virtual is manifest in the interpretation of the text in essential relationship with the world of the text where language crosses its natural and commonplace barriers and gets infused with meanings of being in dialogue. Hence an essential difference between dialogue and conversation needs to be pointed out. Conversations in a literary text are not sheer conversations in their instrumental and utilitarian value. In its instrumental and utilitarian sense conversation simply communicates a matter limiting the being of the speaker as well as the listener. But dialogue, if it is in the domain of language, discloses being wafting the words beyond what they mean in a limited perspective of utilitarian kind; here words are not mere instruments but at one with the inner drive of the literary purpose. The institutional self of language is combated here to convert the text from being *meanable* to *significant speakable*. When we encounter such texts and the characters that they speak of, the world that they depict, the nature that they wonder at, and the God that they address are all in dialogical relationship with us. Initiation into a different knowledge paradigm takes place at this juncture of human experience. A text of this kind is not inside one's mind. But it is in dialogue with the writer/reader, --- in a passage *between* its world and the human subject. Incommensurability of a literary work of art is

thus brought forth in dialogical hermeneutics. Hermeneutical knowledge, from this point of view, is not possession; it is a disclosure.

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**TRANSLATING CHILDREN'S LITERATURE
AS A VECTOR OF POST NATIONAL PEDAGOGIES:
THE CASE OF HORVAT'S WAITAPU**

1. Background

This paper and its predecessor Dasgupta (2010b) represent an interim report of the translation studies component of an international translation project that gives children in Europe and India full access to books from India and Europe that are not accessible through English.¹ The earlier study, Dasgupta (2010b), proposed that core nationalist assumptions — which once determined the place of pedagogy and children's literature in the public space of modern nations — were now giving way to a post-national imaginary. This being so, certain major sites for this rearticulation needed to be viewed in translation-theoretic terms and in connection with Esperanto as a tool that makes translators self-conscious about these substantive issues. It was argued that, to the extent that awareness of issues of intercultural substance supplements and modifies the earlier view of translation as a purely formal task — leading to a post-national imaginary that self-consciously undoes the work of colonialism — we were entering a substantivist space. This meant moving away from the formalist bias of older characterizations of translation.

The formalist approach in general is best seen as an abridgement of the subject matter of language, literature and translation, deploying a truncated set of tools for their analysis in order to cope with certain urgencies — either the pressures of first generation learners or the somewhat different exigencies of first generation theoretical

tools. The transition to substantivism involves undoing such abridgements and viewing these realities properly, in their rich and specific habitat.

I refer the reader to Dasgupta (2011) for the general perspective presupposed here. Translating children's literature is a highly specific niche in the translating trade and correspondingly calls for a nuanced approach that hugs closely the intimate questions that arise at the highly particular encounter between the text that one is translating and the context in which the target language community is going to welcome this text.

One point that typical adult mediators of translated children's books tend to raise is : "Children surely need rich translations, don't they?" Now, one standard way to think about the connotative surplus that good translations should preserve is to invoke the richness present in the physical soil and cultural landscape of the source language and literature. Most translation theories work with such an approach based on a cherished history — from which it follows that children should be encouraged to view translated children's works from abroad as opportunities to get to know the cultures of others, as shaped by history, and just that.

My argument, however, has been that we must take seriously the novelty of today's context — marked by the enterprise of fashioning a post-national pedagogy that can draw children towards a spontaneous positive response to peace, away from the culture of war and of nation-states which freeze the results of war into bounded territories on the map. My point has been that this new context makes it appropriate to focus on a different richness that envisages a shared future. It is no longer appropriate to overemphasize divisively distinct pasts — although embeddedness in this or that cultural envelope must of course receive due attention, for a culture endows a child's growing up with a particular shape and texture. Such a forward-looking richness may take the form of living in a jointly, multi-nationally built house of fantasy. If a fantasy house is a home, warm and capable of universality, then every child can live there in joy, without worrying too much about having to hold

aloft some banner that the child's parents may have thrust into her hands.

This is the point in the argument, however, at which we need to watch our step. The project of globalization imagines a fantasy home that all children can and shall inhabit. It speaks English. It is an extension of the standard middle American home. It erases troubled, painful, confusing memories of all earlier ways of being human. The path to that panhuman imaginary leads through consumerism, seen as a personality-shaping mobilization under the banner of the only welfare that makes sense to the planet, for the entire planet has voted with its feet for the most attractive culture in the world. If we do not watch our step, what we are struggling to find words for will collapse into the arms of this American version of the globalization project.

That version of globalization reads the reality of war-sponsored empire in terms of a fantasy of peace that its pedagogy proposes to nourish its children with. We are at a point in human history at which it is not possible to avoid facing the question of some sort of sustainable structure that coordinates the traffic among all societies — call it generically an 'empire' if this strikes you as the most understandable name for such a unifying set of traffic arrangements; I shall use the term 'generic confederation', leaving open the origins of such arrangements in war or in peaceful negotiation. But the American narrative does not help us to deal with the generic confederation that we must come to terms with in this globalized day and age; that narrative infantilizes the question. What may help us to address the issues of the generic confederation seriously are the resources of the literary continuum that stretches from clear science fiction to clear fantasy, with various hybrids dotting the landscape. Cutting corners, I shall call this continuum 'fantasy' for short.

Why do I think that fantasy, in this broad sense of the term, can help us to come to terms with the contemporary era in general? Why do I find it relevant in the context of the translation of children's fiction in particular?

2. Fantasy and Peace

Here the argument touches base with Dasgupta (2010a), where I discuss the impact on literature — especially on fiction — of certain shifts in the wary system characteristic of the nuclear age. Before 1945 a major world power could imagine that it had the option of waging war against a fellow superpower to make a point; from 1945 onwards it has been clear that, at the very top of the geopolitical system, direct war is a non-option. As I put it in the that paper, nations did not absolutely cease hostilities in 1945, but they did cease absolute hostilities; in that sense that took the first steps on the uncharted road to peace. Absurd as this statement may sound in a world so riddled with war and destruction, I maintain that this escalated violence is an expression of anxiety in the face of the supreme and intractable challenge of building a durable peace.

One consequence of this geopolitical shift is that, just as realist fiction had emerged as a genre of choice to help educate the (prototypically upper-echelon male) citizen of the nation-state, so also there is a typical genre playing this role today — fantasy. Dasgupta (2010a) argues for this view in more detail than I can afford to summarize here; the conclusion is as follows. Suppose you concede my claim that the planet is trying to fashion the intellectual and moral apparatus for a mode of schooling that helps children to grow up as citizens of a peaceful and potentially seamless earth rather than of a nation ready to secede from the rest of the planet at the drop of a hat. It then follows that children need a diet of serious, if child-friendly, fantasy — just as yesterday's children were nourished on a diet of Dickens or Chekhov or Daudet.

More needs to be said for this extremely broad point to intersect with literary considerations. The modern nation-state's pedagogy was geared to the prototypical psychological stance of an upper echelon male. A fuller specification of the profile would add predicates like 'heterosexual', 'non vegetarian', 'allopathy committed' to emphasize certain 'mainstream' stereotypes that the pedagogy was

designed to fortify. Education, public discourse, advertising and other cultural space reinforce each other in the work of manufacturing shared national fantasies with these stereotyped male leaders as the main performers, to be cheered by unspecified others relegated to audiencehood. Certain children were brought up as potential performers (who might, individually, fail), and others as members of the audience.

The rules of the new game that current debates are fashioning make much of this unacceptable. Under a generic-confederal sky, the hegemons of the monolingual, potentially militaristic nation-state no longer look like natural leaders. Movements in favour of women, minorities, weaker sections, groups with alternative preferences begin to erode the support base for the national consolidations that older games had installed as the cultural default. Realist fiction is able to accommodate such aspirations only at the level of experimental or adventurous writing — suitable for some adult readers, but not easy to use in the pedagogy of children on a broad enough scale; to see the point more clearly, one may need to examine an exceptional novel like Sedaris (2000) with care — only a very unusual school would make it available to teenage readers.

Under these circumstances, fantasy becomes the essential backdrop for a pedagogically usable fiction within which children can be reimagined as citizens of confederated nations that make room for hybridity and alternatives. Yesterday, fantasy was a niche taste; today, J. K. Rowling is the staple diet for children in a new mainstream that has been learning how to detoxify itself after centuries of worshipping the purity of blood and the sanctity of warriors.

But again we need to watch it. There is a danger that certain hegemonic forces will capture the cultural market and set up new forms of vertical control. It is surely no accident that J. K. Rowling, who has been successfully marketed all over the world, writes in English. Shall the overcoming of marginalization not mean that other voices receive serious attention?

These are some basic points of reference as we approach the post-national dimension at the pedagogic level. It is possible now to consider the Croatian novel that we are doing business with,

3. Pretranslation and conviviality

Joža Horvat is a distinguished Croatian author, who has received the Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić Award. But Horvat's novel *Waitapu*, unlike the work of Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić that our earlier project had focused on (see note 1), does not choose the landscape and culture of Croatian as its context. It is set in the Pacific. Horvat, a widely travelled sailor, knows his ocean and his islanders so well that he writes credibly even about their gods. His narrative alternates between the human island and various divine abodes, using the divine material freely as a basis for fantasy but maintaining a realist stance on the human island.

His novel *Waitapu* deals with the following question: Assume that you can fashion a god in the image of your best worked out ideas. What would your favourite god do if he wanted to groom a young aboriginal islander as a passible son-in-law? Just how would he work against the webs spun by the wily shamans? How would he liberate the child while avoiding the Scylla of the American dream and the Charybdis of typecasting the aboriginal's life-story in an exoticizing or orientalist mode?

Horvat's prose exhibits a rigorous anti-exoticizing care that manifests what are obviously deeply held convivial beliefs. In his story, the ocean god Parana steeps his future son-in-law Iteo in a pedagogy that is built around this non-negotiably universalistic conviviality. At the same time, Parana teaches Iteo to lovingly notice the lie of land wherever he goes, and to love every part of the planet that he comes into contact with, to invest himself in his habitat as fully as he can. The point is then to seek a multi-local rootedness that cherishes each place -- and the narratives that clothe it -- but does so without any exclusivist worship of its aura.

To ensure the multiplicity of local loyalty, such a pedagogy to give a crucial place to translation. Horvat makes it obvious, writing as he is in Croatian, he has a standard average European in mind. He keeps referring to the tropical setting and to difference from what that typical reader is used to in terms of physical and cultural circumstances. At that level, his writing comes across as already translated. Given his unusually multilocalist agenda, Horvat's resort to such pretranslation in the texture of his writing places us at defamiliarizing distance from the standard nationalist backdrop of the children's writing that has served as the staple diet for generations of children. (For readers not clued into this reference to nationalism, perhaps I should quickly point to an obvious example: Enid Blyton, for instance, encourages you to love all things English and to be suspicious of all things French). Thus, his writing serves a pedagogy that consciously disengages the child from a not yet discredited nationalist pedagogy.

To summarize these remarks, I shall use the term 'convivial alterspace' for the space of otherness, of alterity, that Horvat constructs for his aboriginals at a distance from the absent nation (to which he belongs and for whose children he is writing), at a self-consciously convivial distance that undercuts the 'othering' in such a rhetoric. The convivial alterspace is already a translation. When Zlatko Tišljar translates it into the bridge language Esperanto or Malasree Dasgupta translates this bridge version into Bangla, they are in a sense continuing the author's translative labour.

The substantivist take on translation studies does not eliminate the need for an interrogation of the formal manoeuvres that translators go in for; what substantivism does is ask just how the translator climbs down from the source text's writing to a corresponding speaking, how a conversation-enabling tentative match is established between the perceptual base of that speaking and some target language micro environment for reception, and how the translator climbs back from this imagined speaking to the written outcome.

In other words, substantivist theory and practice, as an unabridgement sensitive to the speech-writing duality ubiquitous in language and literature, watches the way texts and their transforms negotiate this duality differently in different settings. The formalist version of translation studies is sensitive to cultures alone; the substantivist version is a quest for the civilizational element at which cultures can achieve a fuller sense of reality only when they are in conversation and can escape the carve-in-stone appearance of their written base where the past and its custodians keep trying to ambush the future.

In the following section, I take a look at the Esperanto to Bangla translation with such thoughts in mind. This scrutiny does not abandon the standard formalistic worries about modulation, but asks just what kind of moves the translator's manoeuvres count as, at the level of the mutually civilizing intercultural conversation which today has to supersede the nineteenth century's colonial conversations that have never been properly terminated.

4. Modulating Priorities

It is a standard point in translation studies that the French expression *Enchanté*, though 'louder' than its English counterpart *Glad to meet you*, is nonetheless equivalent. Moving between these languages a translator has to modulate the 'loudness' of such items to ensure an adequate perceptual match. Where the Esperanto version of our novel has *Ŝi ruze memorigis la patron* 'She craftily reminded her father', the Bangla translator writes *Se kaaydaa kore bollo* 'She said — with some guile'; *kaaydaa* attributes less guile to the speaker than *ruze*, but this is a difference of 'loudness' that the typical stylistic repertoires associated with Bangla and Esperanto lead us to expect; the translator deals with this difference by performing near-automatic modulations. I mention this passage from page 4 only as an obvious case of such routine work.

The formalist take on translation studies has always recognized modulations of tone as part of the translator's labour. What seems

to us to need attention at the level of post-national conversation between cultures is the modulation of priorities. The fact that the translation relay arrangements between Croatian and Bangla in the Euro-Indian project have been able to use the particularly transparent bridge language Esperanto not only minimizes formal loss of content or connotations, but also heightens one's awareness of the priorities that variably shape the relation between the spoken and the written in each cultural landscape. Since pedagogy is a matter of helping children to make it from the spoken presence of language to the written presence of culture, it is inevitable that the pedagogies at work in each setting play up specific priorities. The translator has to sensitively reset the priorities while recontextualizing.

For example, the Esperanto text *Wakajapu* — as well as, presumably, the Croatian source text *Waitapu* — eschews the use of proverbs and more generally deploys a deliberately markerless rhetoric, invoking a thin discursive fabric in which participants do not expect each other to recognize phrases or sentences from any shared corpus. This avoidance of phrasal stereotypes is one aspect of Horvat's construction of a convivial alterspace.

Translating into Bangla, Malasree Dasgupta has chosen to inject discursive references into the text that have the effect of attaching *Oaootapu* not only atomistically, to the Bangla lexicon, but also molecularly, to discourses in Bangla to which standard pedagogies have exposed the typical child reading such a book. For cited or citation-allusive phrases or fragments exemplifying this strategy in the Bangla text, see the following pages :

10: quotes from alphabet-pedagogy verses and from a Baul song;

23: a quote from a song that gained prominence during the Bangladesh freedom struggle;

63: an allusion to a Shyama-sangeet — used to render a particularly ritualized-sounding passage about how the god Tikururu predestines all creatures to particular trajectories of experience;

102: a quote from a patriotic song by Dwijendralal Roy;

103: a quote from alphabet-pedagogy verses;

108: quotes from songs by Tagore and the particularly widespread phrase *caraiveti* taken from the Upanishads;

122: a quote from a political song popularized in the fifties by the iconic radical singer Hemanta Mukherjee;

123: a quote from a Tagore poem.

The sparing use of these familiarizing devices serves to attach the text to the target community discourse. At one level this strategy makes it easier for the child to read as it keys this reading into a long familiar Bangla corpus. At another level it invites the child to wonder how to deal, as a reader, with the mismatch between the familiarity of these obviously deliberately injected bits of the culture of Bangla with the remoteness of the alterspace whose characters the child is urged to identify with. These invocations of the Bangla canonical corpus, chosen with care to ensure that children will recognize the fragments effortlessly, work mainly around the themes of endurance and courage — thus doing the work that proverbs would have done if they had been present.

The point of using these invocations is to suggest the author's convivial intentions. A Croatian reader would have known that Horvat became an icon when he published *Bess*, the maritime diary that recounts his voyage around the world. Intertextual awareness of this other side of Horvat is in principle available to the readership in Croatia, even to children. The biography given in the introduction to the Bangla translation does mention the published diary and the voyage around the world; but one cannot expect a child reader to take such information into account while reading. The mild use of familiarizing devices serves to compensate for the unavailability of this intertextual access to the full texture of Horvat, a world traveller who has made friends with certain citizens of the sea and who wishes to share this friendship, convivially, with land-locked children as well.

I write 'citizens of the sea' to allude to yet another example of this modulation of priorities in the Bangla translation. On page 10, the Bangla text resorts to variable rendering. *Kaavkrvat thaake*

andhokaare 'the crab lives in the dark', *Taloaar-maach dxheuer naagorik* 'the sword-fish is a citizens of the waves', *Igal uccotaar odhibaasi* 'the eagle is an inhabitant of the heights' — of a uniform expression iterated in the Esperanto version (p 6): *La krabo vivas en mallumo* 'The crab lives in the dark', *La glavo-fisho vivas en la ondoj*, 'The sword-fish lives in the waves', *La aglo vivas en la altoj* 'The eagle lives in the heights'. Again, the Bangla translator uses a splash of local colour to make up for the loss of texture that comes from the contrast between the Croatian reader's ability to see Horvat through a wider window of exposure and the reader in Bengal, who will have just this one book to look at.

The other side of this modulation of priorities effected by the Bangla translator has to do with aboriginal sexuality. Horvat's Croatian readers have no direct experience of aboriginal peoples in Europe; Bengali readers do. Activists working for aboriginal welfare in India inform us that aboriginal friends visiting cities and other 'mainstream' Indian locations cover their breasts, thus resisting what can easily turn into an objectifying move incorporating aboriginal sexual practices in the modern city's metropolitan culture. Wishing to respect this sense of privacy, activists in India, when they show photographs of aboriginals to city viewers who do not know aboriginals personally, avoid showing uncovered breasts or otherwise highlighting differences between our 'mainstream' and the sexual practices of aboriginals in their home communities.

In compliance with this policy, the Indian translator — an NGO worker herself — has subjected the text to the minimal bowdlerization that it needs in order to serve as part of the pedagogy (the broader pedagogy, of course, beyond the confines of the school system) of Bangla-speaking children. What was natural and landscape-enhancing in a text in Croatia, whose public finds islands in the Pacific remote enough to serve as a credible locate for fantasy, would have become potentially titillating if it was mechanically replicated in a Bangla text. For the Indian readership is in the middle of the process of renegotiating the traffic between aboriginal and mainstream systems of literary cognition.

This modulation of priorities in the sexual domain appears already on p 7: *Takhono se chotxo, naaritter aabhaas sabe eseche taar cehaaraae*. 'She was still very young, femininity had barely begun to be manifested in her appearance', renders *Shi estis ankoraŭ knabineto kaj surbruste apenau ekaperis mametoj* 'she was still a little girl, on her chest the breasts had barely begun to emerge' (Horvat 1989: 3).

It would of course be a serious breach of fidelity if the translation were to suppress textual content. Inspection of the texts shows, however, that the editing takes the form of relegating the modulated material from explicit statement to the level of implicatures.

Thus, this Bangla passage (Horvat 2010: 10) — *Aar igaler concu eanon khatornaak, bujhte ki paarcho naa taar phul ki daaxrxabe? Or sangge gharkorle saaraakhon raktaakto hoye thaakbe aamaar txhoxix* — 'The eagle's beak is so dangerous, don't you see what this will lead to? If I live with him, my lips will keep bleeding' — makes available to the reader the same content as *La aglo havas dangheran bekon, kiel li kisos min? Chiukise mi havos sangantajn lipojn!* 'The eagle has a dangerous beak, how is he going to kiss me? At every kiss I will have bleeding lips!' (Horvat 1989: 6). It is just that the Bangla rendering does not have the daughter directly ask 'how is he going to kiss me' — she mentions her bleeding lips, making the reference to kissing perfectly clear. Notice that the reference to bleeding lips is reproduced from the Esperanto version; it is not a work around provided by the Bangla translator.

The language used is by no means infantilizing or one-dimensional. On page 9 we read *Taloaar-maacher naaker opor iyaa barxo eaktxaa dhaaraalo phalaa aache, je hisaal phalaatxaar naamei or naam hoyeche taloaar-maach, or sangge aamaar jombe bole tumi mone karo?* 'The swordfish has a sharp blade, yay big, on its nose, the blade that has given him his name Swordfish, you think I can possibly have fun with him?' Compared to the far more literal *La glavfisko havas surnaze ponardegon, akvaklingan longan ponaardon,*

kiel ni interkisiĝos? (Horvat 1989: 5). 'The swordfish has a massive dagger on its nose, a long dagger with a sharp blade, how shall we kiss each other?', the Bangla text is as racy and as direct — for the experienced reader and the innocent reader, respectively — as a book for children with such content can be, and it interjects a comment about the term 'swordfish' for good measure.

Eros proper is not the only issue. The name of one of the characters is at stake on page 16: *Noukoy utxhlo dxhaaki, taar naam Komorkaatxa ... Komorkaatxaar komorer nicer bes khaaniktxaa kaatxaaa geache. Bachor dasek aage somudre snaan korchilo eamon somay khuble niyeche eaktxaa haangor.* 'The drummer came on board — they call him Waist-Chopped. ... Waist-Chopped has quite a bit missing, under his waist, it got chopped off. About ten years ago he had gone swimming in the sea when a shark attacked him and bit him — that's when it happened.' Consider the consequences of reproducing (from Horvat 1989: 12) the name *Duonpug* 'Half-Ass' and explaining that he had lost half of his posterior to a shark. Given the semiotics of Bangla, the man's name and this description would have come across as much more insulting than the author could possibly have intended. The Bangla word *paachaa* 'ass' belongs to a distinctly lower register than Esperanto *pugo*, American English *ass*, and presumably the Croatian word for this part of the anatomy.

Note again that the description refers quite clearly to a region *under* the man's waist, and leaves the reader in no doubt that a euphemism for the posterior is intended. These manoeuvres clearly fall within the range of modulation — they do not stray into infidelity.

We turn from the translation to the lives of the children who read these stories.

5. Post national pedagogies

The postnational space is marked by an essential multiplicity of pedagogies. The adult reasons for this are familiar: with the

demise of the nation-state legitimately led by canonical upper-class male adults, with the rise of nation-fragments struggling to secure human rights and entitlements for various marginal categories, under terms set by corporate and other non-state actors and overseen by increasingly supra-national political arrangements, it is no longer possible for the state, working through the nation's schools, to offer a unique interpellation to the typical child. The adult take on the matter is that pedagogies in such a period of schooling — and of outside-school edutainment, fed in part by translations and in large part by fantasy rather than realist fiction — are essentially multiple because they are essentially contested.

What that adult critique of classical adult reasoning leaves unclear is how we are to make this multiplicity available to the child without making it look like a consequence of illegitimate dithering by an irresponsible or lazy bunch of parents and teachers.

The problem may become clearer if we articulate our concrete example. In a workaholic India, convinced that its new Anglophone workaholicism has been successful and that therefore the only western linguistic presence in contemporary India should be English, we need to have something to tell children who, prompted by their parents and other ideological moulders, ask us why we are trying to waste their time with Croatian or Esperanto or other junk when they have their hands full.

I would suggest — and this is at the same stroke a practical and theoretical proposal — that we should tell the children, "Teachings come with teams attached. Education is a team sport. When you play with an actual ball on the field, it goes back and forth. When you play the game with books and CDs, there is translation, which is exactly like the sports you know and love. A ball doesn't stand still; why do you expect words to stand still? They only make sense when they are thrown around the field."

If translatability between educational apparatuses is packaged as an essential part of the deal between the child and her books, we move into a new geometry for the play of apparatuses — and will

perhaps prepare the children for a different politics, one in which parties will learn how to read each other's agendas in a spirit of conviviality, without sacrificing differences, but on the contrary learning to make sense of them by reading them with non-hostile, friendly, but also non-surrendering caringness. From such new forms of nurture, a different relation between languages, politics and pedagogies will arise, under a sky capable of serious peace at last.

NOTES :

1. The project *One Indian Children's Book in Europe — Three European Children's Books in India*, sponsored by the European Commission and coordinated by Croatian Esperanto League (Zagreb) in partnership with three other publishers (Interkulturo, Maribor; Edistutio, Pisa; Samatat Sanstha, Kolkata), has involved producing Esperanto-mediated translations of three books into Bangla — Joža Horvat's (Croatian) novel *Waitapu*, Vamba's (Italian) novel *Stormy Jack's Diary* and Tone Partijič's (Slovenian) collection of stories *I wanted to touch the sun* — and of Trailokyanath Mukhopadhyay's (Bangla) novel *Damarucharit* into Italian, Croatian and Slovenian. The translation-theoretic component of the project is co-sponsored by Esperantic Studies Foundation. Support from these sources is gratefully acknowledged.

This international project itself is a sequel to a 2005-07 binational project sponsored by the Croatian Ministry of Culture and coordinated by Croatian Esperanto League in partnership with Samatat Sanstha, Kolkata. That project involved having the novel *The Wonderful Adventures of Apprentice Hlapic* by Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić translated into Bangla through Esperanto as a bridge language. The success of that venture, and of its international follow-up, show that Esperanto can facilitate the entry of less prominent European languages and literatures into the Indian cultural space; even under the best of circumstances, we cannot expect high quality literary translation between Croatian or Slovenian and Bangla

any time soon. These projects are part of the new profile of Esperanto as a movement sponsoring additive or unabridged (knowledge-laden and literature-laden) multilingualism. Earlier work in Esperanto focused on getting people to build (and temporarily live in improvised tents on) this bridge of a language. Today's mature Esperantists are a tribe of translators and multilingualism managers (especially focused on the languages of small or disenfranchised communities), serving customers on both sides of the bridge who need a richer multilingual experience.

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**THE ARABIAN NIGHTS:
A MODERN INTRODUCTION**

Stranger Magic: Charmed States and the Arabian Nights by Marina Warner begins with queries about the nature of attraction of what is one of the world's greatest works of literature and finds the answer in the fact that the magical qualities of the tales of genies and flying carpets are stimulating and inspiring to make readers feel transported from the plane of reality to the level of the creative, imaginative, and the fantastic.¹ Srinivas Aravamudan's *Enlightenment Orientalism: Resisting the Rise of the Novel* revolves around the same text — *The Arabian Nights*.² Since its first European translation in French by Antoine Galland in early eighteenth century, immediately followed by what is known as its "Grub Street" English translation (more about which is to follow below), *The Arabian Nights* proved to be one of the earliest and most famous oriental texts to make the West get attracted to the East (Arab lands, Turkey, Persia, India, and Central Asia) as it appeared in the stories therein, fictional or realistic, and, thereby, influence Western Orientalism.

Historically, the West knew about the East since the time of the encounters between the Egyptians and the Persians, on the one hand, and, on the other, the Greeks, primarily through Alexander's conquests in the 5th - 4th centuries (BC), chronicled by the Greek Historian Herodotus of the time. Throughout history similar direct encounters followed: Romans and Carthaginians/Tunisians during the Punic Wars of the 3rd and 2nd centuries (BC) — given epic expression in Virgil's *Aenied* —; Romans (Pompey/Caesar/Mark Antony/Augustus) and Syrians/Egyptians in the years before and after

the Common/Christian Era, spread of the oriental-originated monotheistic religions, crusades during the 12th and 13th centuries, medieval trade and commerce between the Arabs and the Venetians, medieval contacts between the Arabo-Islamic Spain and Europe and the 15th century Ottoman conquest of Christian/Byzantine Constantinople (1453), today's Istanbul. In literature — imaginative, travel or otherwise — scattered presence of the Oriental and Orientalism can be found as long back as the 12th century in the works of Abelard of Bath, Thomas of England, and Marie de France, followed by Dante (early 14th century), the *Gawain*-poet and Chaucer (late 14th), some 15th century medieval plays, Shakespeare, Francis Bacon, John Dee, Henry Timberlake, Robert Boyle and William Bedwell (early 17th century), Andrew Marvell, Oliver Cromwell, Edmund Waller, John Dryden and other Restoration playwrights, Alexander Ross and French Du Ryer (mid-to-late 17th century).

However, the major literary and historical oriental sources to acquaint the West with the East, prior to the *Arabian Nights*, were Richard Knolles' *General History of the Turks* (1603), much admired by Dr. Johnson, Southey, Coleridge, and Byron; Samuel Purchas' *Pilgrimage* (1613), the immediate source of Coleridge's *Kubla Khan*; and French D'Herbelot's encyclopedic *Bibliothèque Orientale* (1679), itself translated from Ottoman sources and upon which Thomas Moore and Leigh Hunt would draw heavily in their creative encounters with the Muslim East. Nonetheless, it was mainly Galland's *Arabian Nights Entertainment* (1704-12) which visibly attracted popular Western attention to Eastern culture and customs. A 1710 English translation of the Portuguese Manuel de Almedia's *History of High Ethiopia or Abyssinia* (1645) roughly coincided with the publication of the *Arabian Nights* translation, which exercised a formative influence on many writers of the Romantic bent of mind, to be noted below. From that time, the postcolonial Romanticist critic Nigel Leask says,

Chinese, Arabian, Persian, Indian and Abyssinian 'costume' had been popular with European writers, who played on the demand for exotic and transgressive settings. Often such

writings burlesqued oriental cultures themselves, but could also serve as vehicles for satire or moral critique of European manners... from Dr. Johnson's 'Abyssinian' *Rasselas* (1759) and Frances Sheridan's 'Arabian' *History of Nourjahad* (1767) to Goldsmith's 'Chinese' *Citizen of the World* (1762) and William Beckford's 'Arabian' quest Romance *Caliph Vathek* (1786)... In general an earlier eighteenth-century fascination for China was replaced by Indian or Arabian settings in Romantic orientalism, symptomized by William Hazlitt's criticism of the millionaire Beckford's collection of tacky chinoiserie seen at Fonthill Abbey.³

In her essay "Post-colonialism," Deirdre Coleman supports and elaborates Leask's position by claiming that the *Arabian Nights* stories, together with their endless imitations, "feature those negative stereotypes of the Orient which, according to Said, make up a purely 'imaginative geography' of all those values which the West seeks to expel or disavow, such as irrationality, superstition, cruelty, sexual perversion, and effeminacy."⁴ Coleman goes on saying that Western orientalism as a "distorting medium" seized upon the fictional *Nights* stories' tendencies to xenophobia and racism and developed a sense of grotesque fantasy about Eastern otherness as in Beckford's *Vathek*. In agreement with similar observations made by Leask, she also argues that Orientalism, other than deliberately misreading the East, fortunately "provided a critical vantage point from which to criticize Western social and sexual arrangements", didactically exploiting, as in Sheridan's *Nourjahad*, Eastern settings and motifs "for the purposes of satire and critique." She continues,

Others, such as the Eastern poetic utopias of Shelley and Thomas Moore offer more complex projections of European fantasises 'on to orientalism. In other words, eighteenth-century orientalism mirrors the *Arabian Nights* themselves, tales which paradoxically deliver surprisingly feisty heroines alongside predictable stereotypes of cruel, irrational, and oversexed Sultans.⁵

By briefly focusing on some of the modern uses of the *Arabian Nights* in the form of its translations and artistic reproductions, this article attempts to bring out its continued modern appeal from a

number of perspectives. One of these, of course, is the feminine mystique and feminist power as represented by Queen Scheherezade, whose fate, courage, skill and resourcefulness resonate with those of other heroines — be of Biblical, legendary or historical origins such as Eve and Judith, Sumerian Lady Puabi, Carthaginian Dido, Egyptian female pharaohs Hatsheput and Nefertiti, last Ptolemite Queen Cleopatra, Greek Helen and Old Irish Deirdre. Other perspectives would include the creative art of framing stories within a larger-frame story; multiplicity of themes, narrative voices and audiences; and the overall cultural hybridity that the collection displays.

Like the ancient *Aesop's Fables*, Buddhist *Jataka Tales*, Sanskrit *Panchatantra* ("Five Principles" or "Five Discourses")⁶, Arabic *Kalila wa Dimnah*⁷, Persian *Hazar Afsaneh* ("A Thousand Tales"), English Arthurian legends and Robin Hood adventures, Italian (Boccaccio's) *Decameron*, and Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*, the anonymous *Arabian Nights* is one of the most influential masterpieces of literature the world has ever known. Its world is an exotic, fairy-tale one of myths and legends, dreams and visions, and illusions and mirages. It offers an Eastern paradise of faraway places, genies in the bottle, domes and minarets, crescent moons and flying horses, and magic carpets and magic lamps, instead of Western mountain castles and knightly adventures. Had there been no *Arabian Nights*, we would not have known what is a rich store of animal fables such as "The Donkey, the Ox and the Laborer" and "The Birds, the Beasts and the Carpenter", folk tales, such as "The Porter and the Three Ladies," and the highly comic "The Barber of Baghdad." Without the *Nights*, we would have missed out on the heroic tales of adventure and lofty themes called, genre-wise, the *maqamat*, such as "Ali the Persian," or Nizam al-Mulk celebrating the Turkish conqueror Alp Arslan "The City of Brass," in which the story of King Shaddad's lost city of Ubar (also known as Irem or Iram), the so-called "Atlantis of Arabia", from the Qura'nic passage of "The Dawn" is fancifully woven to which William Jones, Robert Southey and Coleridge would later refer, or the very just and wise ruler in the great Harun al Rashid, who intervenes personally, in "The Three Apples," to save

the life of a poor man wrongfully accused of murder. These stories, unlike those of popular taste of the masses on the street, were intended for aristocratic or courtly audience exploiting narrative or rhyme schemes of different literary forms to befit the noble sentiments they express. Delightful and entertaining to children and adults alike, the Arab fantasy tales in the collection are full of magical surprises, suspenseful curiosities and improbable coincidences. Yet they are not without a harvest of moral and practical lessons of wisdom and experience, for example, passions are not to be trusted ("Nur al-Din and His Son") or one should learn from the consequences of one's acts ("The Fisherman and the Jinni").

Also, in the absence of the *Arabian Nights*, we would not have known the eternally unforgettable characters of Scheherazade, Sindbad, Aladdin, Ali Baba, Lokman and, above all, the competent and compassionate Caliph Harun al-Rashid, who, together with his splendid capital of Baghdad, achieved a legendary status of his own. "Though old," they are "perpetually new." Scheherazade is the epitome of story telling art; Sindbad is the embodiment of seafaring zeal; Aladdin makes dream come true with the help of his magic lamp, which takes him on the road to riches; and Ali Baba, simple-minded though he is, finds himself in trouble when he robs the robbers and is luckily saved from their revenge by the "open sesame" trick of his clever housemaid. "These characters," as one critic says,

are the most illustrious of the concourse of humanity swarming the streets of Baghdad and Cairo and Bukhara, not as these cities ever were, but as they eternally are in the wonderful realm of Scheherazade's imagination. It is a realm of gorgeous palaces, of opulent underground hideaways, of wooden horses that fly, of benevolent dogs that present beggars with objects of gold. It is a realm where sorcery conjures up wealth beyond the dreams of avarice, where inscrutable providence turns a stranger into a sultan in the twinkling of an eye.⁸

The *Arabian Nights* stories grew and developed over hundreds of years since the time of the Abbasid Caliph Harun Al-Rashid in Baghdad in the 9th century, who is frequently mentioned during

the entire course of the collection. Just as the Grimm brothers (Jakob and Wilhelm) would collect their fairy tales from German peasants in the 19th century, the folk tales of the *Nights*, which originated in places as diverse as India, Persia, Turkey, Syria, Iraq and Egypt, were initially transmitted through oral tradition by Arab coffeehouse storytellers (*hakawati*) and street entertainers, to be collected later by the Arabs of literary interest. The story telling art as demonstrated by the charming variety of stories-within-stories, especially their immortal first-person narrator-heroine Scheherazade with her simple yet timelessly appealing and disarming four- or six-word introduction, "Once upon a time, there was a..." has attracted the popular readership of all ages over the centuries. The contents of the stories are drawn from far and near such as pre-Islamic Arabia, Egypt, Spain, Persia, India and Central Asia (Uzbekistan) and extend from pre-historic times to the sixteenth century. Folk in nature as most of the stories are, they took shape by word of mouth through generations and varied from delightful to realistic, comic to clownish, action to fantasy, and adventure tale to animal fable. The courtly and aristocratic tradition also is represented in some stories.

The principal character of the *Arabian Nights*, Scheherazade, who symbolizes powerful womanly charm, attraction and inventiveness, is described as "an intelligent woman, schooled in literature, philosophy, and history," who is

revered as a heroine for distracting the sultan Shahrayar from his murderous rampage with intriguing stories ... saved the kingdom from a tyrannical monarch by weaving together her dazzling stories; in doing so, she also helped save the sultan himself, helping him see the evil of his actions and restoring his faith in humanity ... Many find her to be a common ancestor, the storyteller who saved a nation and healed its king.⁹

Earlier, another writer describes her the same way:

Scheherazade — wise, witty, occasionally a trifle wicked. She beguiles from the moment she tells her father she wishes to marry King Schahriar, whose habit it is to wed a different young woman each day and obtain a divorce the next by

having her executed. Scheherazade promises to halt the holocaust and save her own head.

Scheherazade teases the king, and through him the reader, into wanting to hear more. Like Schahriar, we can hardly wait for the next tale to begin. No wonder he kept postponing the decapitation of his latest wife and, after a thousand and one nights, finally forgot about it!"

Sindbad the Sailor, the second major character of *The Arabian Nights*, "possesses all the attributes expected of men who go down to the sea in ships — daring, energy, passion, a tendency to become involved in tight corners and hairbreadth escapes, an ability to draw a fine line between adventure and romance. And he tells us his story with all the solemnity of a sailor telling a tall tale of the sea." Sindbad's adventures giving us a vivid picture of the perilous journeys undertaken by the early mariners who sailed the seven seas probably date from the 9th or 10th century. According to *Akhbar al-Sin wa'l-Hind* ("Notes on China and India"), dating from 851, the oldest firsthand Arabic account of India by al-Yaqubi, the seven seas that one must cross to go to China were those sailed by Sindbad. It describes a voyage from the known to the unknown, from the familiar Arabian Gulf to the strange Sea of Larwi and the Sea of Harqand extending through the dangerous monster-infested waters around the equally strange coral islands of Maldives and Laccadives, not far from the southern tip of India, later described by Ibn Batutta as "one of the wonders of the world."¹¹ The 10th century *Ajaib al Hind* ("The Wonders of India") by Buzurgh ibn Shahriyar consists of seafaring tales remarkably similar to the adventures of Sindbad. The collection suggests long and direct journeys made by many traders (as opposed to the later better organized trade networks consisting of a chain of trips with stops in different parts of the region). It also tells of a ship from Siraf that made seven voyages to Canton and back, all before the middle of the 10th century.¹²

The Arabian Nights together with the Sindbad stories was (and continues to be) an inexhaustible source of inspiration for many writers around the world, who shared in the general interest in the Arab East. American writers such as Charles Brockden Brown

(1771-1810), Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849), James Fenimore Cooper (1789-1851), Washington Irving (1783-1859), Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-1864), Bayard Taylor (1825-1878), Herman Melville (1819-1891), George William Curtis (1824-1892), William Starbuck Mayo (1812-1895), Harotio Alger (1832-1899), Mark Twain (1835-1910), Ernest Hemingway (1898-1961) and John Barth (1930) are worth mentioning in this respect.¹³ On the English and European side, countless poets and writers such as Pope, Defoe, Swift, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey, Beckford, Byron, Shelley, Moore, Tennyson, Arnold, Dickens, Swinburne, Walter Bagehot, Ariosto, Voltaire, Schlegel, Schiller, Goethe, Brecht, Marcel Proust and Jorge Luis Borges are among those to have been influenced by the same.¹⁴

The *Arabian Nights Entertainments* is the title of the first but anonymous English edition, also called the "Grub Street" version, which came out in 1706. It was translated from the first European version in French by Galland (1646-1715), whose *Les Mille et Une Nuits* (*The Thousand and One Nights*), directly from several Arabic manuscript sources as well as some Arab travellers he met, was published in 12 small volumes between 1704 and 1717.¹⁵ Preceded by Charles Perault's *Tales of Mother Goose* (1697) and Galland's seven tales of Sindbad the Sailor (1701), to be later included in his Vol. 3, the popularity of the Grub Street *Nights*, based on the work of the *Hakawati* of Paris (Galland), was so huge in England that, between 1713 and 1800, more than 40 editions/imitations appeared. Beginning in 1723, the *London News* printed the collection as a serial in 445 installments over 3 years, the second such serial in England after Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*. Later, Edward Lane's translation also would appear in monthly installments between 1838 and 1840 before they were collected together and published in 3 volumes.

The popularity of the *Arabian Nights* made many scholars to render them into many other European languages. Mention may be made of those major translations into English alone by Ambrose Philips (1714), Jonathan Scott (1811), Edward William Lane (1838-40)¹⁶, John Payne (1882-84), Sir Richard Francis Burton (1885-1888)¹⁷, Andrew Lang (1898), Husain Haddawy (1990s), and Powys Mathers (1996), let alone different other versions in audio

visual media. Lane was the first not to have used Galland for his source and to have been more accurate than Galland. His translation of selected stories, which, as mentioned above, first appeared in installments and then was collected in 3 volumes, was highly readable and enjoyable. It "reigned supreme as the leading English translation for most of the 19th century", to be "eventually displaced from its preeminent position by other translations." However, the annotations Lane provided were somewhat heavy and erudite containing too much of guiding details about the Arabian life and society and their religious, political and material culture. He thought the classic collection presented "most admirable pictures of the manners and customs of the Arabs, and particularly of those of the Egyptians."¹⁸ Lane's rendition is considered "more prudish than Burton's later no-holds-barred version."¹⁹ Perhaps the greatest value of his translation lies in the abundant explicatory anthropological material she provides that scholars find very useful till today. Consequently, it is this very erudite manner that makes them consider Lane's translation to be "definitive".

Payne claimed his translation, in 9 volumes, to be a "complete" one. Burton made his translation in 10 volumes, with 5 additional volumes of notes only.²⁰ In this way each translator claimed he was providing an authentic and accurate translation, but none could surpass the excellence that was Galland. The secret of his success lay in the fact that he was actually not completely faithful to the original. His translation was a kind of adaptation, literary rather than literal. He was true to the spirit or sense of the letter rather than the exact or precise meaning of the letter. As he wrote to his Dutch friend Gisbert Cuper, he was happy not to remain "attached precisely to the text, for that would not have given pleasure to the readers. To the extent that it was possible, I have rendered the Arabic into good French without being slavishly attached to the Arabic words." Galland altered, abridged, adapted and omitted as necessary and tried to remain true to the demands of the contemporary French literary taste and its written form rather than the oral form in which the tales were originally passed down marked by repetitions and other kinds of padding.

Great stories are like the timeless literary creations of both scenic and reflective beauty. For example, in the context of Persia/Iran where lies the origin of the main frame story of the *Arabian Nights*, there are Abul Qasim Ferdowsi's early 11th century Iranian national epic *The Shahnameh* (Book of Kings)²¹, and, about a century later, Farid al-Din Attar's eponymous epic poem *Mantiq al-Tayr* ("The Conference of the Birds")²² and Omar Khaiyam's *Rubaiyat*, made famous by Edward Fitzgerald's 19th century translation. All these works inspired illustrations of legendary heroes and kings and various other creatures and objects both in Persian/Iranian as well as foreign arts. Similarly, the vivid literary imagery of the *Arabian Nights* has inspired artists and illustrators for a long time. For instance, Lane's translation around 1840s was beautifully illustrated with 650 illustrations. He himself had a background in wood engraving and lithography. There was an edition of the tales published in Philadelphia in 1851 that carried an illustration combining artistic motifs from China, the Middle East and Turkey. In 1878, there was an illustration called "Aladdin accosted by a magician" set in an imaginary China. In 1893 there was an illustration called "Queen Scheherazade relating the Story." The following year there was a picture of an American boy reacting with curious wonder to Aladdin's lamp. The following year there was a French edition which had a color engraving of "Abdullah of the Sea" in Persian miniature style. There is a drawing of 1900 in which a bearded "genie" is seen to be flying captives over an imaginary cityscape. The same year German artist Carl Offterdinger depicted, for a German edition, Sindbad being carried aloft by a rock, a huge mythical sea bird.²³ Perhaps the most well-known reincarnation of the *Arabian Nights* in another art-form is the 1992 Walt Disney animated cartoon film *Aladdin*, which despite being somewhat racist in view of some Arabs became highly popular and led to its sequels on the visual media including "toys, video games, spin-offs, and merchandise."²⁴ One of the well-known photographers in Oman, Nadia Al-Amri, is presently engaged, in 2012, in a project to tell the Scheherazade stories through pictures as part of her concept of visual rhyme of photography through the movement of images and colors.²⁵

Once famous Anglo-French illustrator Edmund Dulac had deeply studied Arab/Persian culture "costumes, street scenes, domestic life, architecture, landscapes, textiles, ceramics, carpets and endless accoutrements" before he sat down to illustrate *The Arabian Nights* in water colour paintings in 1905. He borrowed minute details from Eastern culture such as "turbans, turned up slippers, pointed arches, Moorish mosaics and courtyards, and oases set against starry desert twilights" for his illustration of "Beauty and the Beast" and "The Little Mermaid," among his other western subjects.³⁶ In 1913, at the age of 31, he finally made a visit to the Arab East and took note of

the flat roof, palms [and] cubes of all shades of white, blue and ochre ... baggy breeches with short stockings and sometimes white or yellow top-boots, wide belts and stomachers... flowered shirt with kerchief around the head... merchants sitting cross-legged in their niches, Bedouins wandering up the alleys, the tantalizing patchwork of fabrics, odors and Islamic decorations ... a number of costume sketches, ... especially the women in their yashmaks ... and the well-shaped eyes with eyebrows joining artificially ... muezzin[s]... the cooks, the sweetmeats and their curiously fat vendors, the girls in baggy pantaloons...

Throughout his life Dulac was never without the influence of the *Arabian Nights*, which made him produce not only "Princess Badoura," based on Scheherezade's last story, and "Sinbad the Sailor and Other Stories," but also some magazine covers, and decorate the Royal Albert Hall for a ball with "a glittering vision of Aladdin's cave." Influenced by the Eastern (Persian, Indian and Chinese) art, the Dulac style was "decorative, diminutive, rich in detail and in story-telling content", emphasizing "design, color and texture" and evoking "atmosphere, if not action," as opposed to "sinuous, naturalistic lines." American artist Maxfield Parrish has a colour lithograph for the tale "The Young King of the Black Isles," made in 1929, which reflects a combination of Neoclassical and Romantic styles with Art Deco graphic design. French abstract painter Albert Gleizes has a painting, "Aladdin," made in 1938.

As history tell us, Alexander the Great fought his last great battle in India when he had crossed the Hydaspes River by outwitting

the forces of Rajah Porus in 326 BC. Now, Japanese Yuriko Yamanaka traces the origins of an Alexander story in the *Arabian Nights* to a historical event that took place when he reached India.²⁷ The direct source for the story in the *Nights* may of course be the one recounted originally in the Persian al-Ghazali's early 12th century *Nasihat al-Muluk* ("Book of Counsel for Kings"). In the preface to the jointly authored book, Robert Irwin, a Middle East historian, argues how the *Arabian Nights* fits into the "Orientalist" mindset, characterized by a tendency to dominate, control, distort and pervert, as defined by Edward Said and others. But Irwin also argues that while Said's Orientalist theory can be applied to the British or the French for whom the Orient was the Middle East, Africa and South and South East Asia, it cannot be applied to the Japanese for whom the people to dominate and control were the Chinese. As the other author, Tetsuo Nishio, points out in an article, "Japan accepted the *Arabian Nights* as a constituent part of *European* civilization." Europe's "Orient" was the Middle East while that of Japan was China. Japan was not linked to the Middle East by economics, history and geopolitics. That is why the tales, though no doubt compelling, did not have the same grip/spell on the Japanese as they did on Europeans, and Japanese illustrations of them in the late 19th century sometimes showed the Arab characters dressed like Victorian Europeans.

It seems there is something for everybody in this treasury of tales, which lend themselves to diverse approaches and perspectives brought to them. Not just lords and laymen, male or female, young or old but also the natives and non-natives of Eastern culture, Orientalists and their critics — all find something to their taste and liking in terms of content as well as characters, narrative voices as well as literary style, which, like any other great work of literature, cut across the national boundaries and transcend the barrier of time. The motifs of the *Arabian Nights* — mysteries, wonders, graphic details and fantastically contrasting setting all dealing with a sense of quiet frankness — appear in Craig Thompson's *Habibi* (Pantheon Books, 2011). Even the cook in the kitchen finds some cookbook elements in the collection as suggested by *The Sweets of Arabi: Enchanting Recipes from the Tales of the 1001 Nights*.²⁸

Combining historical and geographic background with figurative imagery the classic collection of the Arabian Nights, therefore, helps bridge difference and continues to address the questions of cultural transformation over the ages.

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2. Aravamudan, Srinivas. 2012. *Enlightenment Orientalism: Resisting the Rise of the Novel*. Chicago: U of Chicago Press.
3. Leask, Nigel. 2005. "East," In Nicholas Roe (ed), *Romanticism: An Oxford Guide*. OUP 140.
4. Coleman, Deirdre. "Post-Colonialism," in *Romanticism: An Oxford Guide*. 247.
5. Coleman. 247.
6. Based on older oral traditions, it is an inter-related collection of animal fables in verse and prose, in a frame story format, containing practical wisdom for would-be judicious young princes.
7. *Kalila and Dimna*, translated into Arabic (from the Old Persian version of the Sanskrit *Panchatantra*) by Abdullah ibn Al-Mukaffa, was so called after the two jackals who are the main characters. See *Saudi Aramco World*, July/August 1972. (All SAW issues are available on line).
8. *Saudi Aramco World*, August/September 1962. 8-9.
9. Darraj, Susan Muaddi. (ed. 2004) *Scheherazade's Legacy: Arab and Arab American Women on Writing*. CT, USA. 2, 3.
10. *Saudi Aramco World*, August/September 1962. 9.
11. Another similar source of about the same time, either preceding or succeeding the Sindbad stories, was the 9th century *Kitab al-Masalik wa 'l-Mamalik* ("The Book of Roads and Kingdoms") by Ibn Khurrah-dadh-bih, from Baghdad. This is still considered one of the most important surviving documents of the Abbasid time, a brief account of medieval trade routes, both by land and sea, taken both by Arabs and Europeans, on their challenging journey to India, Malaya, Indonesia, and China long before the days of Marco Polo. Khurrah-dadh-big's story of "Radhaniyya" suggests that a group of Jewish merchants from Germanic lands were criss crossing through the Rhine, the

Mediterranean, the Isthmus of Suez, the Red Sea, the Tigris, the Euphrates, and the Sind.

12. Iraqi/Abbasid historian al-Masudi of the same century tells us about Huang Chao's sack of Canton in his *Muruj al Dhahab* ("Meadows of Gold").
13. For the influence of *The Arabian Nights* on Melville, see my "Scheherazade in Melville's House: *The Arabian Nights* as an Oriental Resource for the American Novelist" in *The Atlantic Critical Review* (India), Vol. 10 No. 3, July-Sept 2011, pp. 17-34. For the influence of Mayo's 1849 North African novel *Kaloolah* on Melville's *Typee* and *Moby-Dick*, see Robert Lebling, "In Melville's Shadow," *Saudi Aramco World*, Sept./Oct. 2011, pp. 16-24.
14. For a brief discussion of the influence of the *Arabian Nights* on some of these authors, see Abdulsalam Hamad, "Arab Legacy: Scheherazade's Journey to the West", <http://irc.surcollege.ntt>; Time Severin, *The Sindbad Voyage* (London, 1991); Rana Kabbani, *Imperial Fictions: Europe's Myths of the Orient* (1988); Muhsin Jassim Ali, *Scheherazade in England* (1981); Marie Meester, *Oriental Influences in the English Literature of the Nineteenth Century* (Heidelberg, 1915); and Martha Pike Conan, *The Oriental Tale in England in the Eighteenth Century* (New York, 1908).
15. Galland made a number of trips to the Middle East and Turkey and came to know several languages such as Turkish, Greek, Arabic and Persian. He was a student of the great orientalist scholar Barthelémy d'Herbelot, after whose death he completed and published his teacher's monumental *Bibliothèque Orientale* (1697), itself translated from Ottoman sources and regarded as the standard European reference work on the Orient for about a century and half. Galland's other works include *The Indian Tales and Fables of Bidpai and Lokman*. He considered the Arabian stories on which he worked after dinner as a relaxing diversion after a long day's work and described them as "idle tales" that brought him, by his own admission, "more honor in the world than the most beautiful work I can compose about coins, full of erudite remarks on Greek and Roman antiquities," referring to his position as a curator of the royal collection of coins and medals in Paris. See *Saudi Aramco World*, January/February 2008, p. 36.

16. Considered Britain's most renowned scholar of the Middle East, Lane's other works include the widely read *An Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (1836), the immensely useful dictionary *Arabic-English Lexicon*, in 8 vols (1863-78) and his first and most favorite *Description of Egypt* (2000), a book of about 300,000 words and 200 illustrations. To him, Egypt was "the most interesting country" of antiquities where he came, at the young age of 24, in 1825 when the Greek War of Independence (1821-26) was still going on. Egypt was then an Ottoman province but only nominally since it was enjoying a great degree of sovereignty under the firm control of its Pasha Muhammad Ali. First time Lane was in Egypt from 1825-28 (when he brought to England the 8-year old little Greek-born slave girl Nafeeseh only to marry her later), then again from 1833-35, then with family from 1842-49). In Egypt, Lane grew beard, used to dress like an upper-class native and even adopted an Eastern Muslim name - Mansur Effendi. Other contemporary European Egyptologists such as Sir Gardner Wilkinson and Joseph Bonomi also adopted Eastern lifestyles and identities with the former coming to be known as Ismail and the latter as Abu Nom. Among others were J. L. Burckhardt, Giovanni Battista Belzoni, Robert Hay, James Burton and Frederick Catherwood.
17. Burton was a compulsive traveller who journeyed to Islam's holy sites in disguise and searched for the source of the White Nile. He was an apologist for the British Empire in India; a civil servant who used his family connections to find jobs; and a racist who, however, felt that the customs and practices of many native peoples in the East were often preferable to those of his homeland. See Dane Kennedy, *The Highly Civilized Man: Richard Burton and the Victorian World*, Harvard UP, 2005.
18. Thompson, Jason, "An Account of the Journeys and Writings of the Indefatigable Mr. Lane," *Saudi Aramco World*, March/April 2007, 3.
19. *Saudi Aramco World*, March/April 2011, 41.
20. Burton translated the Indian *Kama Sutra* also.
21. Arab/Muslim conquest of Persia took place in 642. *Shahnameh*, one of the world's greatest literary masterpieces, completed by the poet in about 1010, contains the famous story of Rustam but is mainly

- about the pre-Islamic fifth-century Sassanian king Bahram V, challenged to feats of archery by his favourite lyre player, Azadeh.
22. It has been adapted in visual illustration by Peter Sis, published by Penguin Press in 2011. The epic portrays the perilous journey by all the birds of the world to find their legendary bird-king Simurgh, who would free them from their troubles. Only thirty birds reach the realm of the Simurgh (a word meaning "30 birds" in Persian), where they realize that they themselves are the object of their search, which symbolized contemplative perseverance.
 23. "The Hakawati of Paris," *Saudi Aramco World*, Jan/Feb 2008, 34-39.
 24. See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aladdin_\(1992_Disney_film\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aladdin_(1992_Disney_film))
 25. See Oman-based Weekly "Y", Oct. 25, 2011. 21.
 26. See Rebecca Bruns, "Arabian Nights and Art Nouveau," *Saudi Aramco World*, July/August 1979, pp. 2-11. The other Western subjects Dulac illustrated were the novels by the Brontë sisters, Edgar Allan Poe's "The Bells," Alexander Pushkin's "The Golden Cockerel," stories by Hans Christian Andersen, Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and Milton's *Comus*. Deeply influenced by Persian miniatures, he illustrated *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*.
 27. See *The Arabian Nights and Orientalism: Perspectives from East and West*, Yuriko Yamanaka and Tetsuo Nishio, 2006, I B Tauris. SAW Sept/Oct. 2006.
 28. Elias, Leila Salloum and Salloum Muna. 2001. *The Sweets of Araby: Enchanting Recipes from the Tales of the 1001 Nights*, Countryman Press.

**COMMENTARY AS INTERPRETATION
AND TRANSLATION IN
MEDIEVAL INDIAN REPRESENTATIONS¹**

1 Introduction

The history of religious faiths (such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Islam) in India and their movements across time and space becomes an interesting study of cultural transactions on the one hand and a study of the diffusion of religious texts through interpretations and commentaries on the other. Thus, the crossing of linguistic borders by religions eventually creates a new linguistic and cultural situation in which languages and cultures undergo several readjustments. Such readjustments necessitated the emergence of the traditions of interpretation, commentary and translation. By taking a closer look at the processes that operate behind the diffusion of sectarian texts and their translations, we can map the processes that constituted the interpretation and commentary traditions in India and beyond, and search for indigenous models within Asia. Although taking a look at Tibetan, South East Asian, Burmese and other literary traditions is beyond the scope of this paper, an attempt has been made here to take a look at the Indian and the Sinhalese interpretation and commentary traditions.

It is a well-known fact that medieval Indian literature did not have a concept of translation as we use it today. Ramanujan (1992) refers to medieval Indian telling and rendering traditions that are radically different from their purported originals, still sharing an iconic relationship with the purported originals. In recent years, scholars have attempted to map the pre-colonial linguistic correspondences and translation practices; a majority of them

postulate a translation process from Sanskrit to vernaculars on the one hand and a free rendering tradition on the other (Kaviraj 1990, Pattanaik 2002, Mukherjee 1981). Such studies have essentially come from the belt of Indo-Aryan languages such as Bengali and Oriya, which have been understood as monolingual literary traditions emerging during the Bhakti period, roughly around fourteenth century A.D. Satyanath (2006) proposes a *vrat-katha*² model of translation for medieval Indian tellings and renderings and advocates that such translations can only be understood within the context of sectarian and linguistic dimensions in which the medieval Indian communities were transacting with each other. Pointing out that the literary activity in Dravidian languages like Tamil and Kannada starts several centuries before their counterparts in Indo-Aryan languages with the Buddhist and Jaina sectarian writings constituting the beginning of literature in these languages, he suggests that translations in such languages were multidirectional, implying an altogether different set of dynamics than the one that has been subsumed for Indo-Aryan literatures. Hence, with regard to medieval Indian literary culture, we need to remember that translations did not conform to an original-translation-fidelity equation and that a 'free adaptation' to suit the culture-specific requirements was considered appropriate. Accordingly, these works were treated as independent works in the language they were translated into, despite an iconic relationship subsumed between the two texts.

It is in this background, in particular with regard to the role of the sectarian traditions and the movement of religious traditions within the subcontinent, that we need to understand the role of commentaries and interpretations as medieval Indian translations. Furthermore, it has been suggested that the movement to Buddhism and Jainism from their places of origin, in particular to the region of Western and Southern India, necessitated the emergence of the tradition of translation and interpretations from Pali/Prakit into vernacular languages, to facilitate the newly emerging communities of Buddhists and Jains and eventually was responsible for the emergence of commentary traditions (Satyanath 2008). It has been argued here that the coexistence of sectarian traditions on the one hand and appropriating the same body of canonical texts of poetics, grammar, metrics and lexicons facilitated the emergence of a

pluralistic epistemology within the medieval Indian literary culture. That brought in striking structural similarities between the literary, canonical and commentary traditions.

2. *Literary, Grammatical and Translation Traditions in Medieval India :*

A comparative perspective on literary, grammatical and commentary traditions in medieval Indian literature has been attempted here. In order to do the same, let us take a look at the time line of Indian literature (Figure 1). The temporal dimension is represented on the horizontal axis and the literary traditions on the vertical axis. The languages have been arranged in a chronological order which implies a pluralistic epistemology. Approximate dates for the first appearance of inscription, grammar (canonical text), Buddhist, Jaina, Bhakti, Perso-Arabic and Modern (literary) texts have been plotted on the time line. (Index: I: Inscription; B: Buddhist text; J: Jaina text; G: grammatical text; P: Perso-Arabic influence; bh: Bhakti text; M: Modern text.)

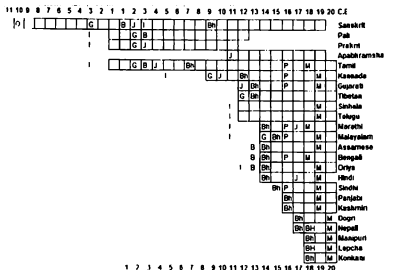


Figure 1 Timeline of Indian Literature

The consequences of the coexistence of multiple sectarian traditions making use of similar literary genres (cf. *kāvya* style)¹, canonical conventions (grammatical, metrical and poetic) and representational formats (manuscript, recitation, performing and sculptural/painting) resulted in a series of convergencies and hybridities that are characteristic of pluralistic epistemologies. The intersection of Buddhist and Jaina sectarian canons, the grammatical literature that guided the formation of the canon, the multilingual and hybrid nature of the texts, the *mixed-style maṇipravāḷam* (the ruby and the coral), and the interpretation and commentary tradition characterizes the salient features of medieval Indian literature. Thus sectarian texts, their tellings and renderings, and their interpretations and commentaries as translations constitute a significant aspect of medieval Indian literature. Temporally speaking, looking into the density of appearance of the commentaries, the time span of 10th to 15th centuries A.D. can be called the hyper-active period of commentary writing. However, an early activity of writing commentaries could be noticed from the 5th to 10th centuries A.D. with regard to Buddhist and Jaina sectarian writings. To be more precise, commentary and interpretation activity during the pre-10th century period could broadly be called the commentaries in the cosmopolitan Sanskrit/Prakrit writing culture, whereas the activity during the post-10th century period could be called commentaries in the vernacular writing cultures.

In fact, there is an urgent need to map the commentaries in different languages along with the frequency of writing commentaries for specific and different texts and also the time span of commentary activity in different languages. Interestingly, the later period, the second millenium, corresponds to the emergence of the vernacular cosmopolitan writing cultures, as a contrast to the conspicuous presence of Sanskritic/Prakrit cosmopolitan writing culture during the first millenium. Table 1 provides a vivid illustration of this development.

<i>Language/ Language Family</i>	<i>I Phase (Sanskrit/Prakrit)</i>	<i>II Phase (Vernaculars)</i>
Tibetan (TB)	7th cent.	—
Tamil (Dr.)	8th cent.	11th cent.
Sinhalese (IA)	5th cent.	12th cent.
Kannada (Dr.)	9th cent.	12th cent.
Gujarati (IA)	12th cent.	16th cent.

Table 1:

Development of commentary tradition in medieval Indian literature.

3. *Structure of Literary Texts, Grammatical Texts and Commentaries :*

Though medieval Indian literature has a longstanding manuscript tradition, Indian literature is a literature in performance and exists both in recitation and performance traditions. In addition, episodes from the literary texts have also been depicted on the walls of various temples through pictorial representations in the form of sculptures and paintings.

In the script-centric tradition, *kāvya*s consist of several *sandhis* (literally, joints or episodes); each *sandhi* starts with a *sūcanā-padya* (synoptic verse), which provides a brief summary of the episode and then expands the summary to its full length in the verses that follow. In a sense, the *sandhi* itself becomes a commentary for the synoptic verse. In the phono-centric recitation format, *sandhis* are recited according to the musical conventions with pauses at appropriate junctures of words like an *anvaya* (verbatim meaning) and are interpreted in a popular variety of language. In a sense, it is commentary and could resemble an intra-linguist or inter-linguistic translation in a broad sense.

The performance traditions on the other hand, could be another form of commentary making use of music, costumes, acting and dialogue and could resemble an inter-semiotic translation. As far as pictorial representations are concerned, in a recent study (Satyanath 2009) taking the specific episode of Kirita Siva and Arjuna from

the *Mahabharata*, from scriptio-centric, phono-centric and body-centric renderings of the episode from medieval Karnataka, it has been pointed out that categories such as gender, caste, religion, sect and language not only interconnect with each other but at the same time, protect their exclusive rights over their knowledge systems. This makes telling and rendering activities in medieval India, be they scripto-centric, phono-centric or body-centric, an exclusively in-group activity meant only for the consumption of the rightful owners of the knowledge systems. Thus, despite the coexistence of different groups sharing a pluralistic epistemology which enables them to understand each other and engage in dialogues, their group-specific right over their specific knowledge system remains protected through multiple tellings and rendering systems over which they retain a monopolistic control. Such a pluralistic epistemology also behaves like a social epistemology and makes models and the process of literary, canonical and commentary activities telescopic and overlapping in nature. Thus, a remarkable structural similarity could be noticed among the literary, canonical and commentary traditions in medieval India.

The grammatical tradition could as well be considered central to the medieval Indian discursive discourse. Hence, it is the structure and organization of the grammatical discourse and its striking similarity with literary discourse that is instrumental in achieving trans-representational formats mentioned above. Apart from the fact that the *vedāṅgas* (organs of the *Veda*) were considered integral to the Vedic recitation system, grammatical traditions in Tamil, Tibetan, Kannada, Telugu and Malayalam (involving grammars, poetics, metrics and lexicons) are active throughout the medieval period with a continuous commentary writing activity.

Furthermore, grammatical traditions generally use a *lakṣya-lakṣaṇa* (model-theory) relationship to discuss the rules. In several instances, the two are illustrated by the same verse, making use of a telescopic model.

A striking similarity at the structural level could be noticed with regard to the organization of grammatical and *lakṣya* traditions.

Let us take a look at the structural organization of *Śabdamañidarpaṇam* (literally, a jewel mirror of words), a Kannada grammar by Keshiraja (14th c.). To start with, it gives a *sūtra* (aphorism, rule) in the verse form, which provides the *lakṣya* (rule). Then appears the *anvaya* (verbatim meaning), followed by a *taṭparya* (summary). Subsequently, the examples are given (*lakṣaṇa*). Lastly the *tikās* (commentaries) are provided. The *lakṣaṇas*, in the form of illustrations might come from texts that belong to other sects. *Śabdamañidarpaṇam*, follows the Jaina *kātantra* school, but provides illustrations from the Jaina, Virasaiva and Brahminical texts. Furthermore, the commentaries for the grammar composed in one sectarian tradition can have commentaries by scholars belonging to other sectarian traditions. *Śabdamañidarpaṇam* itself has two Virasaiva (a Shaivite sect) commentaries despite the fact that it belongs to the Jaina tradition. Furthermore, the maintenance and preserving institutions, the monasteries, themselves may incorporate them within their traditions. One of the manuscripts of *Śabdamañidarpaṇam* starts with a salutation to the Jina, saying *śrī-vitarāgāyanamaḥ*, suggesting that the custodians were Jains; while another starts with a salutation *śrī-gurubasavalīngāyanamaḥ*, suggesting that the custodians were Shaivites. Interestingly, *Nannul*, a Tamil grammar written in the Jaina tradition by Bavanandi (c. 1300) is credited with as many as twenty commentaries. The heterogeneity and trans-sectarian dimensions of grammatical and commentary tradition and thereby its centrality to medieval Indian literary culture becomes clearly evident here.

In a specific sense, in the manuscripts of *kāvya*, the *succa-pāḍya* (synoptic verse) behaves like the *sūtra* (rule) of the grammar and the entire *sandhi* (episode) becomes its commentary/interpretation. In the recitation traditions, the poems are recited like an *anvaya* (verbatim meaning) of grammar and further interpreted and commented upon in prose for the benefit of the heterogeneous audience present. In the case of performance traditions, apart from music, which itself serves as an *anvaya*, costumes, proxemics, kinesics and dialogic dimension, further facilitate the interpretation of the text.

By superimposing the structural aspects of grammatical, recitation and performing traditions, we can realize not only the striking similarities between different grammatical and literary representational formats in a pluralistic epistemology, but also the significance of grammatical tradition as the discursive discourse of medieval India. The interrelationships and structural similarities between the literary, recitation and performance traditions on the one hand and the grammatical tradition on the other, along with the centrality of commentary and interpretation process within these traditions have been schematically represented in Figure 2. In fact, the Tamil grammar *Tolkappiyam* (2nd c.) and several grammars in Indian languages follow the schema suggested here.

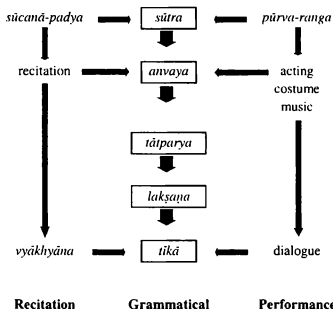


Figure 2. Schematic diagram showing the structural similarities between recitation and performative traditions and grammatical tradition in medieval Indian literature.

4. *Understanding Commentary and Interpreting Traditions :*

We need to understand the functions that different types of commentaries played in order to understand the universalistic as well as the culture-specific dimensions of commentary traditions. Discussing the Tamil commentary tradition, Zvelebil (1973 : 247-48) notes that the existence of a live commentary tradition, and the origin and development of a rich commentary literature presuppose a specific cultural atmosphere and a certain outlook which may be characterized in terms of a number of more or less well-defined consistent elements.

- (i) A look at classicism.
- (ii) An unquestioned authority and importance of the original text.
- (iii) An initiatory structure of learning.
- (iv) An urge towards codification, classification and systematization.
- (v) An appreciative critical tradition.
- (vi) The concept of the division of the totality of recorded literature into underlying texts and comments.
- (vii) A sectarian community actively involved in imagining itself through such activities.

Considering these points, the Tamil literary tradition appears to have meticulously outlined the various functions that commentaries are expected to perform. Furthermore, Zvelebil (1973 : 250) points out three major stages that are related to this process.

Stage 1 : To split and dissect, analyze and examine the text word by word and give, in paraphrase, the meaning of each item in the text.

This has been usually designated as *anvayārtha* or *vṛtti* (verbatim meaning).

Stage 2 : To quote examples and illustrations and parallel loci from other texts.

This has been usually called *lakṣaṇa* (illustrations). The verses quoted often result in excellent collections of poems from various texts and reflect the critical and aesthetic sense of the compiling traditions on the one hand and commentary tradition on the other. On several occasion, as we noticed in the case of commentaries, verses belonging to other sectarian positions might get accommodated as illustration suggesting the text to be an example of pluralistic epistemology.

Stage 3 : To discuss, in the form of question and answers, the merits and demerits of other opinions. This could also be done in a narrative mode.

This has been usually called *tikā* or *bhāṣya*, the commentary. The three types of activities mentioned above could also reflect a chronological development of the commentary tradition. Over a period of time, the commentary tradition appears to have undergone a meticulous taxonomic order. *Viracōḷiyam*, a Buddhist Tamil grammar (14th c.) differentiates as many as fourteen kinds of commentaries (Zvelebil, 1973). Similarly, *nettiprakaraṇa*, a Buddhist text in Pali, describes as many as sixteen different modes of conveying the meaning that needs to be considered while translating Buddhist texts into other languages.

4. Terminology of Commentaries :

At attempt for a comparative study of the terms used to designate the concepts commentary and interpretation and a mapping of their epistemological origins have been done here (Table 2). Within the obvious limitations of depending on the lexicons, terms from Sanskrit, Pali/Prakrit, Tamil, Kannada and Telugu have been considered here for such a mapping. The terms have been taken from Apte (1957-59), Turner (1962-66), and Burrow and Emeneau (1984).

Term	Language/Family	Gloss
<i>anupāda</i>	Skt., MIA, Dr.	following the feet closely, following every word, explaining the text word to word.
<i>ādarśa</i>	Skt., MIA, Dr.	mirror, a commentary, gloss.
<i>upadarśanam</i>	Skt. MIA, Dr.	a guide, exhibiting, representing, a commentary.
<i>anuvyākhyānam</i>	Skt. MIA, Dr.	that which comments and explains.
<i>upavarṇanam</i>	Skt. MIA, Dr.	minute description, delineation in detail.
<i>vyākhyānam</i>	Skt. MIA, Dr.	communication, narration, speech, lecture, explanation, exposition, interpretation, comment.
<i>īkā</i>	Skt. MIA, Dr.	to move, go, resort to, a commentary, gloss
<i>tēpanam</i>	Skt. MIA, Dr.	sending, throwing, a gloss, comment, a gloss within a gloss.
<i>nibandhanam</i>	Skt. MIA, Dr.	A composition of work, a treatise, a commentary.
<i>upalēkhanam</i>	Skt. MIA, Dr.	to lie close to, to cling to, to write closely.
<i>bhāṣyam</i>	Skt. MIA, Dr.	speaking, talking, exposition, a gloss, a commentary, any work in the common or vernacular language.
<i>aṭṭha-kathā</i>	Pali	exposition of the sense, explanation, commentary.
<i>jotaka ~ jyotikā</i> <i>- dīpikā ~ jyoti</i>	Pali	illuminating, making light, explaining, exposition, commentary
<i>nuddesa</i>	Pali	descriptive exposition, analytical explanation by way of question and answer, interpretation, exegesis.
<i>vaṇṇana</i>	Pali	explanation, commentary.

<i>akalam</i>	Tamil, Dr.	extent, expanse, elaborate commentary.
<i>urai ~ ore</i>	Tamil, Kan. Dr.	speaking, utterance, commentary, exposition, gloss.
<i>tēpanam</i>	Skt. MIA, Dr.	sending, throwing, a gloss, a comment, a gloss within a gloss.
<i>vārtikanu</i>	Telegu	a commentary, gloss.

Table 2. Terms for commentary in different Indian languages and their gloss.

A closer look at the terms discussed from the Indo-Aryan and Dravidian languages suggests that the terms for commentaries have epistemological origins in concepts such as saying, going close to, following, expanding, illuminating, revealing, etc. This might suggest the possibility of an oral commentary tradition as a percussor to the written commentary tradition. Furthermore, the names for the commentaries ending with words such as *darśinī* (revealing), *dīpinī ~ dipikā ~ jotika* (lighting), *darpaṇa* (mirroring), *ullāsini* (pleasing, ocean), etc., suggest the conceptual categories that have gone into the construction of commentaries. Interestingly, terms from Dravidian languages not only adopt the Sanskrit/Prakrit terms to represent various shades of commentaries and interpretations (c. f. *tēpanam*) but also appear to follow similar etymological and semantic trajectory (c. f. *urai ~ ore*). The discussion so far suggests that within the terminological and structural levels, it is possible to map a more or less uniform model of tradition for medieval Indian writing cultures. Figure 3 schematically represents the semantic range and etymological origins of the commentary and interpretative traditions in medieval Indian literature.

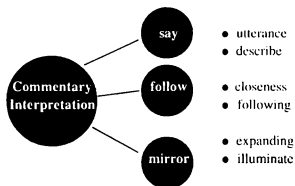


Figure 3. Schematic representation of the semantic range and etymological origins of commentary and interpretative traditions in medieval Indian literature.

5. Sinhalese Commentary and Translation Tradition :

In order to explore further the processes and models of Indian commentary tradition beyond the geographical limits of India, we need to look into the contiguous regions such as Sri Lanka, Tibet and Burma; the regions to which Buddhism spread and is still flourishing. It was during the second phase of Buddhism, i.e. 3rd century B.C.E. to 3rd century C.E. — to be precise, in about 80 B.C.E. — that the Buddhist scriptures which were a part of the phono-centric tradition were put into scripto-centric tradition. This transfer from phono-centric to scripto-centric format took place in the western region of India and from Magadhi to Pali, implying an intra-linguistic translation. In fact, Pali literally means 'holy scriptures' and most probably, represented a literary form of ancient Paishachi that was prevalent in western India, whereas Magadhi represented the language of the eastern region and the one in which Buddha might have given his sermons. It was during the third phase of Buddhism (3rd century C.E. to 10th century C.E.) that the adaptations, interpretations and commentaries to the Buddhist original teachings and practices appeared.

In order to understand the model and process that operated within the Sinhalese commentary tradition, we need to take a look

at the various terms that have been used to designate the commentaries to *Dhammapada*. This is apart from the Pali words that have already been listed in Table 2. The following English translations are usually used by the Sri Lankan websites to designate commentaries pertaining to Sinhalese Buddhism. The various Sinhalese terms used have been indicated in bold letters. It is interesting to note that the meaning of say 'or tell' is quite consistent even in terms like *atthakatha* (*artha* + *katha*, 'meaning + telling'), though it has been interpreted as 'legends' (stories). However, this actually suggests that a Pali commentary and a Sinhalese commentary are designated by the terms *atuvava* and *sannaya*.

Dhammapada atthakathā, 'commentary on the legends of *Dhammapada*'.

Dhammapada sannaya, 'verbatim Sinhalese translation of *Dhammapada* with the Pali text'.

Dhammapada vyākhyāva, 'commentary on *dhammapada*'.

Dhammapada varṇana, 'explanatory commentary on *Dhammapada* in Sinhalese'.

Dhammapada kathā, '*Dhammapada* stories, 'saying'.

Dhammapada atuvava, 'Sinhalese commentary on *Dhammapada*'.

Dhammapada purārṇa sannaya, 'ancient Sinhalese commentary on *Dhammapada*'.

Based on the details outlined above for Pali and Sinhalese terms for commentaries on *Dhammapada*, the following schema can be suggested for the Sinhalese commentary tradition. The term *getapada* which refers to Sinhalese commentary probably has to be derived from *granthipada* (knotted words), suggesting a Sinhalese commentary on obscure words. Figure 4 schematically represents the development of terms and meaning for the concepts, commentary and interpretation in Sri Lankan Buddhism. A comparison of figures 2 and 3 demonstrates changes and continuities between medieval Indian and Sri Lankan commentary traditions. The changes that could be noticed with regard to Sinhalese commentary tradition suggest the significance of local traditions on the one hand, and

importance of cultural-specific dimensions in understanding commentary traditions on the other.

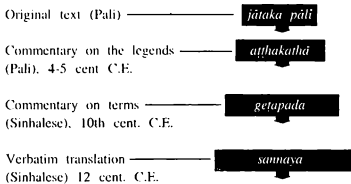


Figure 4 : Schematic diagram showing the development of Sinhalese commentary tradition.

6. *Implications :*

The origin and development of commentary traditions need to be understood within the context of movement of religions, linguistic contacts and the local interpretative and translation traditions they came in contact with. The terminological analysis of words associated with commentary and interpretation in medieval India suggests interesting epistemological origins and subsequent appropriations and transformations that have happened within the commentary and interpretation traditions. Such a mapping within a trans-cultural perspective is the urgent need of the day in order to understand the historical changes and continuities within the commentary traditions. Finally, while it is true that there is a need for generalization in order to understand the terminological and structural processes that regulate interpretation and commentary traditions, culture specific appropriations and transformations are

equally crucial and thus need to be addressed adequately. A collaborative approach involving the understanding of interpretation and commentary traditions in the regions of medieval Buddhism that include India, Central Asia, East Asia, South-East Asia would probably take us further in a better understanding of commentary and interpretative traditions on the one hand and medieval Asian translation traditions on the other.

NOTES :

1. An earlier version of this paper was presented at the *Fourth Asian Translation Traditions Conference* held at The Chinese University of Hong Kong during 15-17 December 2010. I am highly indebted to Mr. Nimal Wijesiri, Lecturer of Sinhalese Language and Literature, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka for discussing issues related to Sinhalese commentary tradition. My acknowledgements are also due to Dr. J. Srinivasamurty, M.E.S. College, Bangalore for his suggestion on commentary tradition in Sanskrit and to Professor A. Mariappan, Department of Modern Indian Languages and Literary Studies, University of Delhi for his suggestions on commentary tradition in Tamil. Acknowledgements are also due to Ms. Stuti Sharma, for her suggestions and comments.
3. Literally means 'vow-story' and refers to the story that is narrated in vernacular languages of India as a part of performing a ritual vow.
4. It usually refers to highly ornate court-sponsored poetry written in Sanskrit, Prakrit and vernacular languages making use of Sanskrit poetic conventions.

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STRUCTURAL DIVISIONS IN NARRATIVE ECOLOGIES OF INDIAN LITERARY TRADITIONS

Structural division of a text is an issue that enjoys a wild growth on the unattended edges of the contiguous fields of narratology and genology. Despite their history of robust practices, none of the two fields has felt the necessity to delve into the issue of structural division of a text which exists on the margin shared by narratology and genology. In modern theoretical discussion, structural divisions of text find no clear conceptual ontology as their so called '*terra episteme*'¹ in poetic debates remains undefined. In a situation of such indefiniteness, resorting to the definitive theoretical posits of narratology and genology will serve no good. Although there are attempts to underscore certain theoretical observations in the study of structural divisions, the study primarily rests on the inductive reasoning drawn from the available data, and precious little on the formulae of narratology and the abstractions of genology.²

Although neologism is a bane of narratology, it is safer to use it as conceptual categorization rather than as a theoretical absolute. 'Narrative ecology' as a compound idea models itself on the principles of systemic function of environment — an integrated web-like structure where every single natural phenomenon is interlinked and interdependent. In this regard 'narrative ecology' conceptualizes creating and designing the narrative environment wherein the stories unfold. A narrative environment can be either virtual or physical. The former is a narrative framework to be assessed from both narratological and thematic positions. The latter, physical narrative

environment might be any location or space where stories can be told or performed. Narrative ecology, however, is sensitive to the factors such as elements of narrative, ordering or structuring and modes of dissemination. Western and Indian literary traditions have their marked distinction in the structuring of their literary as well as scientific discourses. A logical extension of this point would imply that each genre in its literary tradition has its own customs and departures for internal textual divisions. The point comes home when one enlists titular categories such as 'canto', 'book', 'section', 'chapter', 'act', 'scene', etc. in the Western and 'parva', 'sarga', 'khaṇḍa', 'kāṇḍa', 'udyota', 'ullāsa', 'pariccheda', 'adhyāya', 'aika' among others in the Indian context. Such nomenclatures also suggest their particular narrative function and they punctuate the 'space syntax' in the given discourse. However, this critical pursuit also needs to be located in generic specificities, for these textual divisions assume their narratological significance only in their context of genre. And the situation is doubly complicated by the fact that each literary tradition has its taxonomic version with diverse criteria. This obfuscation notwithstanding, the study promises findings of teleological necessities and conventions behind this multitude of structural divisions and their consequent impact on theme and reception.

John Frow while considering the structural dimensions of genre refers to Ann Imbrie : "(Genre is defined) by the way it expresses human experience (subject matter) through an identifiable form (formal character) that clarifies or discovers the values in or attitude toward that experience (generic attitude)".³ What is meant here is that genre acts as a regulating principle upon structuring and shaping of meaning at the level of text for specific teleological ends — it produces effects of truth and authority that have bearing upon the content. According to Frow, the structural dimensions configure a genre in primarily three ways : (a) the formal organization, (b) the rhetorical structure, and (c) the thematic content.⁴

The formal organization of a genre consists of 'material' and 'immaterial' aspects where the former includes language, layout of

printed pages, paragraphs, grammar and syntax, and the latter includes time and space.

The rhetorical structure of a genre is concerned with the way the message establishes textual relations between the author/sender and the reader/receiver. Having established this relation, the rhetorical structure then involves a negotiation and an agreement or a disagreement about the status of validity of the message.

The thematic content of a genre is thought of as that human experience which a genre invests with significance and interest. It is here that one deals with a set of *topoi*, recurrent topics of discourse or a recurrent iconography.

In the above positions, especially with regard to the formal organization of a genre what is in ellipsis or missed out is the textual division of the thematic content affecting the rhetorical structures *etc.* 'chapter'.

Chapterization is an internal ordering of a genre that is contingent on its specific (non) literary form and narrative framework. In its crude sense a chapter is understood as a practical division that signals break; a new set of arguments in a work. It is more conspicuous in written literature than it is in the oral. Its usefulness is understood by the fact that such a textual division monitors progress in narrative; increases reproducibility of the message outside the context; facilitates objective mode of citation that more or less remains immune to any distortion of textual import in different time and place; and that it yields a definite shape to the work. If these are the teleological necessities common to all forms of narrative; it also must be reckoned that these necessities have varying degrees of fulfillment in the myriad forms of human verbal and nonverbal expressions. Literary traditions in the West and in India in accord with their narratological and generic requirements have variously prized these teleological necessities of narrative. And this accounts for varied practices of chapterization as to why we have a reservoir of styles and nomenclatures of internal structural divisions of the text.

Both the Western and Indian discourse traditions have marked differences in employing structural divisions. This study is not part of the present discussion, as it necessitates more elaborate analysis and greater space. Ancient Indian oral and written traditions exhibit quite a rich spectacle for internal textual divisions. In the Vedic and Agamic contexts, unlike Semitic culture, no one scriptural text is given a premium status over the other. Besides, the scriptural texts exist in a sort of taxonomic unison with various commentaries, explanatory works, glossaries, philosophical treatises, eclectic digests, folk tales, myths, legends and narratives. Both *śāstra* and *kāvya* traditions exist parallelly and often mutually draw on generic attributes of each other which becomes evident in cases of *śāstra-kāvya*, e.g. *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi* or *Saundaryalahari* by Saṃkaracarya and *kāvya-śāstra*, e.g. *Gītagovinda* by Jaiadeva. *Tout court*, the generic ramification is vast and varied and the authors turned the situation to their advantage by bringing in creative and new internal textual divisions corresponding to the subject of the work and the treatment given to it.

Classification of nonliterary texts in ancient India could be said to have been motivated by pedagogical and research purposes. The different auxiliary texts that existed are *sūtra* texts, *bhāṣya* texts, *vṛtti* texts, *pañjikā* texts, and *tīkā* texts. So far as literary criticism is considered, cataloguing of diverse literary forms has been invariably made by almost all major poetics. Nonetheless, VK Chari makes it clear that "literary criticism in Sanskrit is not predominantly a genre-oriented criticism" (63) and that "...the theory of genres or formal categories did not play a crucial role in Sanskrit theory of literature, as it did in Western criticism."⁵ The implication here is that although ancient poetics provided generic classification, their main interests lay in discussing literary properties such as figures of speech and thought, style qualities, obliquity of expression, suggestion, and the *rasas*. Secondly, the concept of genre was not applied as a general criterion of evaluation. However, it must be

noted here that Rājasēkhara (10th c AD) in his *Kāvyaamānaṣā* exclusively devotes his second *adhyāya*, 'Śāstranirdeśa', to a taxonomic illustration of verbal discourse as available in his time. Apart from numerous generic models of *kāvya* literature found in Sanskrit literary criticism, Rājasēkhara's model stands out in part as a reply to VK Chari's thesis that generic classification does not exist per se in ancient poetical tradition of India.

VS Apte enlists kinds of chapters in the following verse :

*Sargovargah paricchedodhātādhyāyā'ṅka saṁgraham;
Ucchavāsah parivartasca patalah kāṇḍamānanam|
Sthānam prakaranam caiva parvottās'hānikani;
Skandhāṇśau tu pūrānāḍau ca prāyaśah parikīrti tau||⁶*

The kinds of chapters in Indian literary context can be catalogued in three taxonomic classes as below :

Scripture/Technical	Literary	Poetics
Adhikarana.	Anka	Adhikāra
Adhyāya	Āśvāsa (in Prākṛta)	Adhyāya
Anuvāka	Kāṇḍa	Bindu
Āhanika	Khaṇḍa	Kirana
Brāhmaṇa	Kudavaka (in Apabhraṁśa)	Marīci (a subclass in Ratna)
Kāṇḍa (in Brāhmaṇa)	Lahari	Mayūkha
Maṇḍala	Lambaka	Pariccheda
Niṣyaṇḍa	Mañjarī	Prakaraṇa
Patala	Pāda	Prakāśa
Prakarana	Parihāsa	Ratna
Skandhah	Para	Sandhi
Sūkta	Prakarana	Taraṅga
Upadeśa	Samaya	Ucchavāsa
Valli	Sarga (in Sanskrit)	Udyota

Varga	Stabdha	Ullāsa
	Ucchavāsa	Unmeṣa
	Udghāta	Varga
	Vilāsa	Vilāsa
	Vinyāsa	Vimarśa
	Yavanikā	
	(name of Act	
	in Saṭṭaka)	

These titular nomenclatures are not haphazardly adopted. They have direct or indirect structural and thematic moorings contingent on type of discourse. Moreover, the tradition of commentary is one of the strongholds of Indian knowledge culture whereby a text exists in its generic totality. That is, for the pedagogical and scholarly purposes the main text is used and often reproduced along with its auxiliary studies. For instance, Hemacandra's poetical corpus includes *Alanikāracuḍāmanī*, a Vṛtti text, whose kārikā text is called *Kāvyaṇuśāsāna* with the commentary on it called *Viveka*.

It would be opportune here to look into the root meanings of the major terms :

Titles in Scripture/Technical texts :

1. *Adhikaraṇa*: [*adhi* + *kr*, 'control', 'hold'] It is a complete argument treating of one subject. According to Mimāṃsakas, a complete *adhikaraṇa* comprises five investigative modalities :

Viśayo viśayascaiva pūrvapakṣatathottaram|

Nirnyasceti siddhāntah śāstra'dhikaraṇam smṛtam||

In this regard, a complete *adhikaraṇa* contains five limbs: *visaya* (subject matter), *saṃka* (doubt), *pūrvapakṣa* (antecedent view), *uttarapakṣa* (response to *pūrvapakṣa* in accordance with śāstraic tenets), which forms *siddhānta* (established principle) and thereafter all this mentation leads to *nirṇaya* (conclusion). Therefore, *adhikaraṇa* implies that which is authentic. *Adhikaraṇa* is also adopted in the texts of Sanskrit literary criticism such as in *Kāvyaṇimāṃsā*, which was originally composed of 18 *adhikaraṇas* of which only one "Kavi rahasya" has come down to us.

2. *Adhyāya* : a lesson; reading; a part or section of a work, a common title for chapter.

3. *Anuvāka* : saying after, reciting; a chapter of the Vedas, a subdivision or section.

4. *Āhanikā* : performed or occurring in the day time, diurnal; a religious ceremony to be performed everyday at a fixed hour; to be completed in a day time; division or a chapter of a book. This title is mostly adopted in the Bhāṣya texts.

5. *Brāhmaṇa* : the Brahmana portion of the Veda (as distinct from its Mantra and Upaniṣada portion) and consisting of a class of works called Brāhmanas (they contain rules for the employment of the Mantras or hymns at various sacrifices, with detailed explanations of their origin and meaning and numerous old legends). It contains *vidhi*: rules or directions for rites, and *artha-vāda* : explanatory remarks. Each Veda has its own Brāhmaṇa.

6. *Kāṇḍa* : a part or division of a work; any distinct portion or division of an action or of a sacrificial rite; a thematic division of the title in *Bṛhādāraṇyaka Upaniṣada*; ⁷ *Kāṇḍa*-s in the *Rāmāyaṇā*. *Kāṇḍa* is usually titled after the theme of the events narrated such as war, peace, etc.

7. *Maṇḍala* : a large division or book of Ṛk-veda. The 10 Maṇḍalas in Ṛk-veda are according to the authorial nomenclature of the hymns; these are divided into 85 Anuvakas or lessons, and these again into 1028 Suktas or hymns (further mechanical divisions into Aṣṭakas, Adhyāyas and Vargas)

8. *Niṣyaṇḍa*: to flow or trickle down; flow into; (in Buddhist literature) necessary consequence or result. Thematically, understanding of the thinker when matured and ripened flows freely into his words.

9. *Pātāla* : eyelid; a cover; a kind of text, especially in Tāntra tradition; a division or section of a book. As a title of the chapter in Tāntra tradition, it figuratively suggests a discourse that covers and preserves 'secret knowledge' which is to be passed on to its *adhikari* or one who is spiritually eligible for that.

10. *Skandha* : a column (of a building); in a narrative *skandhas* as section divisions shore up the load of certain portion of events and meanings with a definite size in scale. The *Bhāgavat Pūrāṇa* is composed of 12 *skandhas*. *Skandha* also means a separate branch or system of knowledge.

11. *Sūkta* : [*su* + *ukta* 'well said'] Vedic hymns.

12. *Upadeśa* : [*updis* 'to show'] Law; commandment; the first utterance; (in Vedānta) an exegetical reading of the gist of the Vedas for expounding the intended meaning; training, indoctrination; stating the secret. This titular category is seen in the *Gheraṇḍasamhitā* in the Yoga tradition.

13. *Vallī* : a creeper; chapter division in *Kathōpaniṣada*.

Titles in Literary texts :

1. *Āśvāsa* : [*āśvas* 'to breathe freely'] Revival; breathing freely; a narrative conflict with a certain solution that brings a sigh of relief to characters and readers.

2. *Khaṇḍa* : to break, to divide; a tale or narrative divided into parts (*khaṇḍa katha*); a minor poem whose subject is not heroic or sacred with one topic only (*khaṇḍa kāvya*).

3. *Kudavaka* : it is a Prākṛta term. In poetry, it is a division of metrical lines in equal number. A *kudavaka* mostly comprises the group of 5 *śloka*s.

4. *Lambaka* : It is a name of the larger sections or books in the *Kathāsaritasaṅgāra* (Ocean of the Streams of Stories). This text has 18 *Lambakas* comprising 124 *Taraṅgas* or chapters. The word *lambaka* is derived from *lambhaka* comprising *lambha* 'obtaining or attaining; meeting with, recovery' from the root *labh* 'to gain possession of; succeed in'. In a narrative the term stands for a section or cluster of events where the protagonist after a series of conflicts achieves the goal, recovers or reunites and thus fulfills expectancy born of narrative. The small chapters are called *Taraṅga* (Wave) which emerge and subside with the narrative flow. The

title *Kathāsaritasāgara* itself is a beautiful metaphor in that incidents, anecdotes, traditional wisdom, fictional accounts like rivulets and streams endlessly generate tales. These varied tales like constant waves in the streams ultimately dissolve into the unfathomable ocean which is narrative.

5. *Laharī* : a wave; ripple.

6. *Mañjarī* : a bunch of flowers; a collection of verses in a work as in *Bharatamañjarī* and *Brhatkathāmañjarī* by Kṣemendra.

7. *Parihāsa* : Merriment, jesting, ridicule. The term *Parihasa* is chosen as chapter division in *Narmamālā* by Kṣemendra, which is a humorous piece of composition with various jokes and light incidents.

8. *Parva* : [*pr* + *vanip* 'stem', 'knot'] a knot, joint, limb, member; a member of a compound; a cycle of changes in the moon — the junction of the 15th and 1st lunar fortnight; a nodal break or division in the work at a point where two seemingly different themes/events conjoin and come together.

Interestingly, the semantic logic of fluctuations and conjunctions of the moon also seems applicable to the meaning of *parva* as a book section. In a large literary composition when the size or length of a section varies in accord with the gravity and propriety of the content, the title *parva* is adopted. For instance, the first "Ādi-parva" in the *Mahābhārata* is the longest one and its last *parva* "Svargārohana" is the shortest one. Parvas are titled after the theme of the events narrated such as war, peace, etc. Some works have adopted this term in their title viz., *Parvamālā*, *Parvaprakāśa*, *Parvaprabodha*, *Parvasamiraha*, *Parvasamibhava*, etc.⁷

9. *Pādaḥ* : a fourth part of *adhyāya* in any work such as in *Brahmasūtra* or *aṣṭadhyāyī*. For instance, *Brahmasūtra* has 4 *adhyayas*. Each *adhyāya* has 4 *Pāda*, which in turn has *adhyakaraṇa* in varying numbers consisting of different numbers of *sūtras*.

10. *Prakaraṇa* : [*pr+kr>lyut>an* 'forming of a definite shape'] to depict, define or critique; subject, topic, event; treatment, discussion, explanation; a part or section of any work.

A *prakaraṇa*, as a principle of plot, is a narrative design in a specific shape and size whose main function is to support the

main subject matter of the work. Further, a *prakaraṇa* involves a number of subordinate, diverse and small incidents or subjects called '*prakārī*' in its course. It also means one type of drama with contrived or fictitious story such as *Mṛcchakaṭika*, *Mālatīmādhava*, etc.

11. *Samaya* : this term suggesting 'time' is employed in *Samayamāṭṛka* which is didactic in nature. The poet makes use of this particular term that sheds light on its subject-matter.

12. *Sarga* : [*srj* 'to create'] letting go; creation; nature; universe; a large section in poetic composition, especially epic. In the opinion of Kapil Kapoor *sarga* is a section division that does not impede the flow of the narrative.⁸

13. *Udghāta* : beginning; sequence; indication; a part or chapter of a work, especially in Kathā. It is an independent section in a work with the title varying in accord with the incident or subject matter.

14. *Vilāsa* : sensual joy, rapture; a division in a poetic composition in the work of Jagannātha.

15. *Vinyāsa* : putting or placing down; arrangement; order or connect words, composition (of literary works). This term is figuratively used as a section division in *Suṃtāttilala*, a work on metrics that deals with the rhythmical cadence of various meters.

Titles in Poetics :

1. *Adhikāra* : a *prakaraṇa* or chapter of a work. *Bhāvaprakāśa* of Śāradānaya (1240 AD) while adhering to the Śaivaite metaphysics of Kāśmīrā comprises 10 *adhikāras*.

2. *Bindu* : a drop; a point. *Mandāramaranda campu* by Śrīkṛṣṇabhaṭṭa (1250-1350 AD) comprises 11 *bindus*. This is an eclectic work inclusive of *nāṭya*, *alanikāra* and *kavi-śikṣā* traditions.

3. *Kiraṇa* : a ray of light.

4. *Marīci* : a ray of light.

5. *Mayūkha* : a ray of light. *Cāndraloka* by Jayadeva (1300 AD) has 10 *Mavūkhas*.

6. *Pariccheda* : to cut on both sides; to limit on all sides, define or fix accurately, discriminate, decide, determine (as between false and true, right and true); a division of text in chapters which vary in their contents. A '*pariccheda*' is usually not influenced by the subject matter of the work; it is albeit reckoned with the count or number of section such as *pariccheda* one, two, etc.

7. *Prakāśa* : to become visible; make luminous or clear; in the poetical tradition such an exegesis that defines, clarifies and simplifies the subject. It is usually adopted as a postpositive attributive worked in a title, viz., *Kāvya prakāśa*, *Bhāva prakāśa*, *Tarka prakāśa* etc. Besides, as a title of a chapter it occurs in *Śrīgāraprakāśa* or Bhojaraja that has 36 *prākāśas*, and in *Daśarūpaka* of Dhananjaya (1000 AD).

8. *Ratna* : jewel, precious stone. '*Ratna*' is a type of *Adhikaraṇa*. *Alaṃkāraśekhara* by Keśav Miśrā (1563 AD) comprises 8 *Ratnas* and each one is further divided into sub chapters called '*Marīci*' (lit. 'a ray of light'). In *Sāhityasāra* by Accyutarai Modaka (1696 AD), the 12 *Ratnas* have metaphorical and mythical associations, viz., "Dhanvaṇtrī Ratna", "Aerāvata Ratna", "Viśa Ratna" (on literary defects), "Rambhā Ratna" (on types of women characters), etc.

9. *Sandhi* : juncture; structural divisions of plot in Indian dramaturgy suggesting a junction of connecting events. Ksemendra uses this title in his *Kavikanthā bharaṇa*, a text on *kaviśikṣā*. There are five *Sandhis* or chapters in the work. The five *Sandhis* of this work are modelled after five *sandhis* of drama viz. *mukha* (opening), *pratimukha* (progression), *garbha* (development), *avamarśa* (pause), and *nirvahan* (conclusion) which successively help the protagonist realize the purpose. This logical development in mimetic representation is extrapolated by Ksemendra in his dietetic discourse so as to unfold his thesis in successive *Sandhis* as : 1. acquisition of poetic capacity by a non poet, 2. training for a poet, 3. attaining excellence, 4. merits and demerits, and 5. access of various branches of knowledge

10. *Ucchvāsa* : act or respiration; a part of a chapter of a book.

11. *Udyota* : lustre, shine. There are 4 *udyotas* in *Dhvanīyāloka* by Anandavardhana.

12. *Ullāsa* : delight; a type of figure of thought; a division or section of a book. *Kavyapakasa* of Acharya Mammaṭa (1050-1100 AD) is made of 10 *ullāsas*.

13. *Unmeṣa* : ['to open the eyes',] opening; expansion; flash; manifestation; emergence. *Vakroktijivitam* by Kuntaka comprises 4 *unmeṣas*.

14. *Varga* : a separate division, class, set, multitude of similar things; a section, chapter, division of a book, a subdivision of an *Adhyāya* in the Ṛk-veda, which comprises 8 *Aṣṭakas* or 64 *Adhyāyas* or 2006 *Vargas*. In *Kāvyaśāstrakārasāra*, a text of poetics by Udbhaṭṭa (800 AD), there are 6 *vargas*.

15. *Vimarśa* : a critical analysis or disputation; (in *Trika darśana*) Self-consciousness or awareness of Parama Siva full of *jñāna* and *kriyā* which brings about world-process. *Vyaktiviveka*, a text on poetics by Mahimabhaṭṭa (1050 AD) includes 3 *vimarśas*.

16. *Viveka* : an act of discretion of right from wrong. *Nāṭyadarpana* of Rāmchandra has 4 *vivekas*.

The table enlisting the words above variously assorts forty-seven words, however, enumeration of which lays no claim to finality. Here, these nomenclatures are classified under the broad categories of *śāstra*, *kāvya* and *alanikāra*, which encompass in their fold all kinds of compositions. The titles under these three categories have something in common.

In the *śāstra* texts the name of a chapter makes a statement about the authenticity of the subject matter by suggesting in its etymology the method of the discourse. Hence, titles chosen here are technical, and specific to certain discourses viz. grammar, Vedas, agamas, or other disciplines.

In the *kāvya* texts, titular headings are adopted on the basis of the kinds of literary form, the structure and volume of the work, thematic integrity observed for the events or narration, and on rhetorical effect.

In the *alanikāra* texts or poetics, titles are often borrowed from the existing traditions of *śāstra* and *kāvya* literature. Here, the chapter titles often figuratively build their relevance upon the main title of the work as in *Dhvanyāloka*. In fact, Sanskrit literary critics have been creative in finding out new and striking words as titles for their work of which headings such as 'Bindu', 'Kiraṇa', 'Mayūkha', 'Ratna', 'Marici', 'Vilāsa' are noticeable.

II

In the knowledge culture of India where each conventional practice of life is rooted in its own logic, the situation is more complex. There exists a robust system of chapterization based on formal, structural, thematic, figurative, mythological and rhetorical criteria whereas the ritualistic and anagogic concerns remain secondary and occasional. In fact, parallel, to the issue of kinds of chapters runs another equally symbolically suggestive issue of number of chapters in a work. Numbers in Indian metaphysics have their bearing upon metaphysics and ontology of cosmic symmetry.⁹ They symbolize or suggest association with various deities and universal truths. In most cases the specific number of chapters like the title, is not haphazardly selected. For instance, 36 chapters of *Nāṭyaśāstra* suggest 36 *tattvas* of Śaivism; or 8 *adhyāyas* in *Aṣṭādhyāyī* symbolize Sivastaka. The numeric significance of chapters requires a special study focusing on the unity of theme of a work with the metaphysics of a particular *darśana siddhānta*.

Amidst this vast variety of kinds of chapters, we notice that each kind has its distinct epistemological significance and teleological function. Curiously enough, ancient Indian grammarians, philosophers, scholars and creative writers have been consistent and exact in their adoption of the specific kind of chapter for their work. Yet nowhere in the tradition of poetics or any literary discourse do we come across a systematic discussion on it although its uniform practice is there for us to witness in innumerable works.

The present note of structural divisions amply suggests that the existing variety in kinds of chapters is not merely a result of idle musing on the part of the composer. These terms enjoy their significance for reasons as follows: the generic tradition; structure or design of the work; subject matter; manner of performance -- aural or visual; and intended rhetorical effect on the receiver. These criteria in isolation, however, neither influence nor determine selection of the kind of chapters. They are, in fact, inalienably linked together. Each kind of chapter achieves its sui generis character only when factors such as genre, structure of a work, medium or form, content, and rhetorical dynamism of the narrative act in unison and thereby enhance functions of one another. This synergy of structure, content, principle of ordering, creative play, and figurative import of the titular terms is what characterizes narrative ecology in a given literary tradition. In fact, this critical observation on the ancient Indian art of composition endorses the fact that an advanced and sensitive culture of writing was cultivated by the past thinkers. And therefore such a minute care given to linguistic technicalities of structural divisions helped secure a strong unitary effect of the work as a whole i.e., *prabandha-rasavyanjakatva*. Any work so conceived and composed becomes a signature of the concerned knowledge culture, for the art of composition is the art of systematizing knowledge as well.

The above thought should be pursued further. Construction of knowledge in words is itself an act of making knowledge systematic. In this synergy of matter and method every single meaningful word, sentence, grammatical relation as well as generic convention, discourse structure, idea or theme, creativity or deviation employed to make a striking thematic statement contribute to the reason and purpose of the work. In this complex mechanism of verbal discourse, a significant role is played by 'chapterization' whose '*terra episteme*' (knowledge field) modestly exists on the margins of both narratology and genology.

NOTES :

1. I prefer to use this coinage 'terra episteme' to signify a field of knowledge which is essentially multisystemic, interactive and which resists definition from any single point of view.
2. Paul Cobley in his *Narrative* observes, "While formula is demonstrable, then, its reception is less easy to define. Genre, in contrast to formula, is concerned precisely with the issue of how audiences receive narrative conventions." (213)
3. John Frow, *Genre*, (London: Routledge), 2005, 73.
4. Ibid., 74.
5. VK Chari, "The Genre Theory in Sanskrit Poetics" in *Literary India: Comparative Studies in Aesthetics, Colonialism and Culture*, etc., Patrick Colm Hogan & Lalita Pandia, (New Delhi: Rawat Publications), 74.
6. VS Apte, *Sanskrit Hindi Kosha*, (Delhi: Motilal Benarsidass), rpt, 1989.
7. Vide the entry on *parva* in William M. Monier's *Sanskrit English Dictionary*.
8. Kapil Kapoor, "Theory of the Novel: an Indian View" in *Genology*, 54.
9. Indian mathematics greatly owes to Indian metaphysics. For instance, the word *Sunya* (Zero) in Sanskrit is derived from the root 'sun' meaning 'to swell', 'increase', 'void', 'empty' which correlates to 'brh' 'to grow' as in Brahman. The term *sunya* is analogous to Brahman which is complete unto itself. Nothing can be added to or distracted from it and yet it adds value to anything with which it is associated. It also reflects in the famous Upanisadic dictum: '*Pūrṇamada pūrṇamidaṁ pūrṇata pūrṇam udacyate. Pūrṇasya pūrṇamadya pūrṇamevavasiyate*'. Thus the Indian gift of Zero to the world has its roots in Vedic wisdom.

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সাহিত্যিক প্রতিগ্রহণ: চণ্ডালিকা

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সাহিত্য সমালোচনার প্রভাব আর প্রতিগ্রহণ—এই শব্দদুটির বেশ চল রয়েছে। এক দীর্ঘ সময় জুড়ে ‘প্রভাব’ শব্দটি প্রবল জনপ্রিয়তা লাভ করলেও বর্তমানে এই শব্দটির সীমাবদ্ধতা সমালোচকদের দৃষ্টিগোচর হয়েছে। পূর্ববর্তী কোন শিল্প, সাহিত্য বা স্টার দ্বারা প্রভাবিত হয়ে সৃষ্টি করার প্রসঙ্গ আজ অনেকটা প্রাসঙ্গিকতা হারিয়েছে। বরং বলা চলে, প্রত্যেক স্টার তাঁর গ্রহণক্ষমতা ও অভিত্রায় অনুসারে পূর্ববর্তী শিল্প-সাহিত্যকর্মকে আত্মীকৃত করে সৃজনপ্রক্রিয়াকে অব্যাহত রাখেন। শুধু স্টারি বা হবেন কেন, পাঠকও এই প্রক্রিয়ার সঙ্গে যুক্ত থাকেন। সৃষ্টিকর্ম সমাধার পর স্টারও তো পাঠকই হয়ে যান। পাঠকের প্রত্যাশাও লেখকের সৃজনকর্মকে চালিত করে। আর সকলকিছুর ওপর সময়ের অপ্রতিহত প্রভাব। স্টার-পাঠক আর সময়ের সম্মিলনে যে উন্মেষ তা সাহিত্যিক প্রতিগ্রহণের জয়মানতাকে বজায় রাখে।

সাহিত্যিক প্রতিগ্রহণের তত্ত্ব প্রধানত জার্মান গোষ্ঠীর তাত্ত্বিকেরা সংকীর্ণ অর্থে ব্যবহার করেন। প্রতিগ্রহণ এক সাহিত্যিক প্রক্রিয়া যা পাঠকদের কাছে ‘গ্রহণযোগ্যতা’ অর্থে ব্যবহৃত হয়।^১ তাত্ত্বিক স্ট্রায়ারলে এই প্রসঙ্গে বলেছেন, “The activity of reading, the construction of meaning, and the reader’s response to what he is reading.”^২

হান্স রবার্ট ইয়াউস তাঁর ‘লিটেরারি হিস্ট্রি অ্যাজ এ চ্যালেঞ্জ টু লিটারেরি থিওরি’ (১৯৭৪) প্রবন্ধে লেখক কীভাবে পাঠকের দৃষ্টিভঙ্গি ও নিজস্ব পাঠপ্রতিক্রিয়া আর সৃজনকর্মকে বিনির্মাণ করে ভুলবেন, তার ত্রিধাবিন্যাস ‘আনুভূমিক প্রত্যাশা’র পথ বাতলেছেন,

- (1) by the familiar standards or the inherent poetry of the genre;
- (2) by the implicit relationships to familiar works of the literary-historical context;

(3) by the contrast between history and reality... The third factors includes the possibility that the reader of a new work has to perceive it not only within the narrow horizon of his literary expectations but also within the wider horizon of his experience of life.⁵

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‘শ্যাদুলকর্ণমৃত’র বৌদ্ধকাহিনীকে অবলম্বন করে সতীশচন্দ্র রায়ের ‘চণ্ডালী’ কবিতা (বঙ্গদর্শন, ১৩১০ চৈত্র); রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুরের ‘কুয়ার ধারে’ (৯ চৈত্র ১৩১২), ‘জলপাএ’ (২৪ জুলাই ১৯৩২) কবিতাদ্বয় আর ‘চণ্ডালিকা’ (১৩৪০ ভাদ্র) নাটকের নবনির্মাণ ঘটেছে। আমরা এই সাহিত্যকর্মগুলির মধ্যে ‘কাব্য’ হয়ে ওঠার কৌশল, সাহিত্যিক-ঐতিহাসিক অনুশঙ্গ, ইতিহাস এবং বাস্তবতার পার্থক্যের সঙ্গে জীবনের অভিজ্ঞতার বিস্তার ইত্যাদি প্রতিগ্রহণের বিষয়টিকে চিনে নেবার চেষ্টা করব।

বৌদ্ধগ্রন্থ ‘দিব্যাবদান’-এর অন্তর্গত ‘শ্যাদুলকর্ণাবদান’-এর কাহিনীর সঙ্গে সতীশচন্দ্র আর রবীন্দ্রনাথ দু’জনেই পরিচিত ছিলেন। তাঁরা রাজেন্দ্রলাল মিত্রের ‘দি সংস্কৃত বুদ্ধিষ্ট লিটারেচার অব নেপাল’ গ্রন্থের ‘শ্যাদুলকর্ণাবদান’ কে আকরগ্রন্থ রূপে ব্যবহার করেছেন। এই কাহিনী বর্ণবিষম্য সমস্যার ওপর আধারিত। রাজেন্দ্রলাল কাহিনীটি সম্পর্কে লিখেছেন, “Story of Sardula-Karna, in narrating which opportunity is taken to point out in detail the utter fatuity of relying on caste distinctions.”⁶

করণাঘন বুদ্ধ, তাঁর প্রিয়শিষ্য আনন্দ আর চণ্ডালকন্যা প্রকৃতির কাহিনী উদ্ধার করা হল,

“The scene of the story is laid at Śrāvastī. When the Lord was once sojourning there, in the garden of Anathapindada, Ānanda, his favourite disciple, used daily to go to the city to collect alms. One day, after partaking of a repast in the residence of the householder, when he was returning to the hermitage, he felt thirsty. Seeing a girl, named Prakriti the daughter of a Chāṇḍālī, raising water from a well, he asked her for a drink, and was duly served. The girl was smitten by the appearance of the hermit, and as he could not be otherwise infleucned, she besought her mother, who was proficient in charms and incantations, to bewitch him, by her art. The mother prepared with cowdung, in the middle of

the courtyards of her house, an altar, lighted a fire therein, and threw into it, one by one, 108 arka flowers (*Calotropis gigantea*), repeating a mantra each time. Ānandā could not resist the force of this charm, and in the evening came to her house, and took his seat on the altar, while Prakriti, in delight, was engaged in preparing a bed for him. The conscience of Ānanda now smote him, and he began to cry, praying that the Lord may rescue him from his dangerous position. The Lord, perceiving by his miraculous power how his desciple was situated, recited a Buddha mantra, which immediately overpowered the incantations of the Chāṇḍālī, and Ānanda returned to the hermitage. The Lord, thereupon, taught him the potent mantra whereby he could always overcome such evils.”^১

রবীন্দ্রনাথ ‘চণ্ডালিকা’র ‘ভূমিকা’য় উপরিদ্ধৃত অংশটির প্রায় আক্ষরিক অনুবাদ করেছেন। কিন্তু প্রতিগ্রহণের নিয়মেই সেই কাহিনি যখন রবীন্দ্রনাথ পুনঃকথন করলেন, তখন তার মধ্যে বাহ্যত মিল থাকলেও স্বরূপত তা স্বতন্ত্র ‘পাঠ্য’ হয়ে উঠল।

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রবীন্দ্রনাথের উৎসাহে সতীশচন্দ্র রায় ‘চণ্ডালী’ কবিতাটি রচনা করেন। চৈত্র (?) ১৩০৯-এ বঙ্কু অজিতকুমার চক্রবর্তীকে লেখা চিঠিতে সতীশচন্দ্র জানিয়েছেন, “রবিবাবুর অনুদ্বিষ্ট ‘আনন্দ ভিক্ষু’র কাহিনীটিকে ছন্দোবদ্ধ করিয়াছি।”^২ রবীন্দ্রপ্রশংসিত কবিতাটিতে নাট্যরূপ দান করার ইচ্ছাকে সতীশচন্দ্র বাস্তবায়িত করতে পারেননি। বঙ্কু সত্যেন্দ্রনাথ দত্তকে আশ্বিন (?) ১৩১০-এ তিনি জানিয়েছেন যে ‘বৌদ্ধ নাটক’-এর প্রথম অঙ্গের কিছুটা লিখে হারিয়ে ফেলেছেন। তাঁর অকালমৃত্যুও নাট্যরূপ দানের ক্ষেত্রে অন্তরায় হয়ে দাঁড়ায়। তিনি অজিতকুমারকে চৈত্র (?) ১৩০৯তে ভারতচন্দ্রের ‘বিদ্যাসুন্দর’-এর পাঠানুভূতি ব্যক্ত করেছিলেন যার মধ্যে তাঁর রসবোধ ও মনোভঙ্গির প্রকাশ ঘটেছে। রাজকন্যা বিদ্যা আর রাজপুত্র সুন্দরের আকাঙ্ক্ষা ও চাতুরী তাঁর প্রাণে ‘অপরাহ্নের মত মৃদুরস’-এর অনুভূতি জাগিয়ে তুলেছিল। “...আমাদের ব্যক্তিত্ব নানা সৌন্দর্য্যে জড়িত—তার মধ্যে এই অনন্তিত্বের কারুণ্য সর্বাপেক্ষা সুন্দর। ...ভারতচন্দ্রের নায়কনায়িকার ইন্দ্রিয়বিকার মধ্যেও আমি নারীর মাধুর্য্য এবং যুবকের মাধুর্য্য পাইলাম উহাই--ক্ষণস্থায়ী, লালসা জড়িত সেই চিরস্থায়ী মাধুর্য্যটিই এই অপরাহ্নের পড়ন্ত রৌদ্রের সঙ্গে মিশিয়া মৃদু মৃদু ঘাতে আমার প্রাণকে বাথা এবং সুখ দিয়েছে।”^৩

অর্থাৎ, নায়কনায়িকার ইন্দ্রিয়বিকারের মধ্যেও ক্ষণস্থায়ী লালসা জড়িত কারুণ্যে চিরস্থায়ী মাধুর্য পাওয়া যায়, যা কবিত্রাণকে যুগপৎ ব্যাথা এবং সুখ দান করে। 'চণ্ডালী'র মধ্যেও কি এই ভাব বিলসিত নয়?

রবীন্দ্রময় জীবন ও যাপন সতীশচন্দ্রের। রবীন্দ্রবলয়ে থেকেও 'কবিতারচনার মত নিবিড় ব্যাথা'কে 'ধরবার সং প্রচেষ্টা 'চণ্ডালী' কবিতা। কবিতার চরিত্র তিনজন, আনন্দ, অম্বিকা আর চণ্ডালী-মা। সতীশচন্দ্র আলটপ্কা 'প্রকৃতি' নামের বদলে 'অম্বিকা' নাম কেন আনলেন তা আমাদের হৃদয়ে ফেলে দেয়। কবি আনন্দকে শিবের রূপকল্পে ভাবতে চেয়ে কি 'অম্বিকা' অর্থাৎ প্রেমের তাপসীমূর্তি উমাকে আনলেন? তবুও আমরা বলব যে আনন্দের সঙ্গে অম্বিকা নাম একেবারেই যুৎসই হয়নি। বর্ষাকাল, অম্বিকা অভুক্ত, সারারাত কেঁদেছে, বেশভূষা বিস্মৃত। তার চণ্ডালী-মা উদ্বিগ্ন হয়ে জানতে চেয়েছে কারণ, সমস্যা সমাধানে তৎপরতাও দেখাতে চেয়েছে। কবিতাটির সূচনা চণ্ডালী-মায়ের উদ্বেগের মধ্যে দিয়ে—“হায় মা, এ কী মা, আজি এ কী হল, এ কী হল তোর—”।

মা আর মেয়ে দু'জনে বৈশালীর প্রান্ত-গ্রামবাসী চণ্ডালী। চণ্ডালী-মা গুঢ় তন্দ্র-মস্ত্র জ্ঞানে। অম্বিকা 'চণ্ডাল-বাল্য' হলেও রূপে অনন্যা—‘অনঙ্গের যেন ফুল-মুটি’। রঙ্গময়ী এই নারীর ঠাট-বাট সহজসুন্দর। আবার ‘বলয়বন্ধ বিমুক্ত, প্রমত্ত রূপাঙ্কুস’ কী কম ‘ভয়ংকর’! দারুণ মধ্যাহ্নবেলায় বৈশালী নগরীর বটতরুতলে সংঘটিত অভূতপূর্ব ঘটনা সে তার মা'কে শোনায। তৃষাকাতর ‘বহিঃশিখা’-রূপী ভিক্ষুদর্শনে অম্বিকা শিউরে উঠে, তার চোখে ঘনিয়ে ওঠে রূপানুরাগ, কর্তব্যে ভুল হয়ে যায়—

এ কী রূপ মরি মরি! এ কী রূপ আগুন সমান—

তুষায় শরীরখানি মৃদুমৃদু তাহে কম্পমান—

ঠিক যেন বহিঃশিখা!

ভিক্ষু আনন্দ চণ্ডালী অম্বিকার হাতে জলগ্রহণ করে ‘শীতল’ হয়ে আশীর্বাচন করলেন, কিন্তু তাঁর অগোচরেই তিনি যেন অম্বিকাকে অন্য কোন বার্তা দিয়ে গেলেন। অম্বিকার মনে মীনকেতন যে ধ্বজা ওড়ালেন তাতে তার মনের জ্বালাই উত্তরোত্তর বাড়তে থাকে। লাজ-ভয় ফেলে সে অভিসারোদ্যোগী হয়ে ওঠে। নতুবা, বিকল্প উদ্দেশ্যসিদ্ধির জন্য মা'কে মস্ত্র শিখিয়ে দিতে বলে। আনন্দের প্রতি রূপাঙ্কতায় সে সমস্ত সংসারের প্রতিস্পর্শী হয়ে ব্রতধারী সম্মাসীকে মস্ত্রে বেঁধে ব্রতভঙ্গ করতে চেয়েছে। প্রেমের কাছে ন্যায়ের প্রবলই অবাস্তব। মস্ত্রপ্রয়োগে সে ‘ভুজঙ্গবন্ধনমাঝে’ প্রিয়কে রেখে যেখানে খুশি যেতে চায়। সে বেপরয়া, এমনকী ‘ঘোর নরকগামিনী’ হবারও স্পর্ধা রাখে।

'চণ্ডালী'র দ্বিতীয় অংশে বৈশালী নগরীর বেণুবনে করুণাঘন বুদ্ধকে ঘিরে 'ধরার
পাথার ব্যাথী'রা রয়েছেন। ক্ষুদ্র তৃষা-লোভ-বিকারমুক্ত বৃহৎ হৃদয়গুলি মরজগতের বৃহৎ
বেদনায় অধীর, তাঁরা মরজগৎকে পরম মমতায় ছুঁয়ে রয়েছেন। বাহির-অস্তর,
অন্ধকার-আলো, অজ্ঞান-জ্ঞান, অশান্ত-শান্ত, ক্ষুদ্র-প্রশান্তের বৈপরীত্য রীতিতে বোনা
অস্ত্রির বহিঃপ্রকৃতির পরিবেশের সঙ্গে নিবাতনিঃস্পন্দ তথাগত ও তন্নিষ্ঠ শ্রাবকসংঘের
আত্মস্থ রূপবর্ণনা রয়েছে—

আজি ঝঞ্জা বহিতেছে গরজবিদ্যুৎজলে মাতি—
আজি যথা নভস্তলে হংকারিছে পাগলিনী রাতি—
তবু তার মাঝে সবে বুদ্ধে ঘিরি বসি আছে স্থির—
তেমনি ওদের হিয়া অকম্পিত ঝড়ে পৃথিবীর!

অশ্বিকার মন্ত্রপ্রভাবে আনন্দের মনে সর্বনাশা বিকার জাগে, সংঘাসনে বসেও তাঁর
কণ্ঠ মন্ত্রধ্বনিত নয়, লালসার বহিতে উদ্ভাসিত হয় অনিন্দিতা অশ্বিকার জলদানরত
চিত্র।

আলোকউৎস বুদ্ধকে কেন্দ্র করে রয়েছেন শ্রাবকসংঘ, আর বহিঃপ্রকৃতিতে বিরাজ
করছে দুর্যোগপূর্ণ তমিষাময় রাত্রি। কেন্দ্রাতিগ শক্তিরূপে ক্রিয়াশীল কামনা, তার অমোঘ
টানে আত্মবিস্মরিত, দ্বিধাচঞ্চল আনন্দের যাত্রা ঘটেছে আলোক থেকে অন্ধকারে,
মানবত্ব থেকে অবমানবত্বে। বেপরোয়া চণ্ডালী অশ্বিকা কাঙ্ক্ষিতকে পাওয়ার জন্য কুটিরে
যজ্ঞ করে ভয়ংকর মন্ত্র পড়েছে। প্রিয়ের আগমনের জন্য উৎকণ্ঠাও লক্ষণীয়—

পদধ্বনি মৃদু মনোহর—
ও বুঝি বাজিছে মোর গূঢ়তম মরম-ভিতর!
আহা, আমি কী বা দিয়া বরিব হৃদয়রাজে আজি?
এ মোর ভৈরবীবেশে?

প্রিয়ের আসার অপেক্ষা-আকাঙ্ক্ষার পাশাপাশি শুরু হয় শৃঙ্গার-প্রসাধনের পালা।
প্রিয়সম্মিলন, কেমন হবে সেই মুহূর্ত? এরই মধ্যে হঠাৎ মুক্তদ্বারে এক দীর্ঘমূর্তি
জ্রুকুটিকুটিল ভীষণ মুখে গর্জন করে ওঠেন, 'কী করিলি?' বিদারিত মরণের স্ফোভের
এই তীব্রস্বর শব্দময়ী ঝঞ্জার ভিতরেও প্রতিধ্বনিত হয়, 'বহিঃশিখা'কে অন্তরের কালিমাতে
ঢেকে অশ্বিকার কম্পমান মন অনুতপ্ত হয়ে ওঠে, মর্মে বিশ্বজোড়া হাহাকার, ব্যাকুল
ধ্বনি বাজে—

হায় হায়, কী করিনু! কী করিনু! জগতের মণি
কোন মহাব্রতজ্ঞানে পথচ্যুত করিলাম আমি

...হায়, আমি কেমন আমায়,

দিব তব পদতলে?—এ যে হিয়া ভস্ম লালসায়!

একসময় বর্হিপ্রকৃতি শাস্ত হয়, যজ্ঞবহি নিবে যায়, প্রকৃতিও শাস্ত-স্থিত-আত্মস্থ হয়। অধিকার 'দু-চোখে দ্বিগুণ ধারে' জল ঝরে, নিঃশর্ত আত্মসমর্পণের সুর বেজে ওঠে—

কোথা? দেব, কোথা কুল? যেতে হল ফিরে যেতে হল--

আজ ফিরে যাও যদি যাব আমি তব পদতল।

ফুল ফুটাইব আমি এ হৃদয়ে বিজন সাধনে—

এ হৃদয়পুষ্প লয়ে সেইদিন যাব আরাধনে।

শব্দ ঘোষ 'চণ্ডালী'র মধ্যে দেশ-কালাতীত এক চিরন্তন দ্বন্দ্বমুখর মানুষের সন্ধান পেয়েছেন, "... সমগ্র রচনাটিতে তার (অধিকা) ... কুলপরিচয় অবাস্তব হয়ে আছে, একান্ত হয়ে আছে কেবল যে-কোনো নারীর—অথবা যে-কোনো মানুষের—এক আত্মদ্বন্দের ছবি, ভালোমন্দের বোধ নিয়ে তার কাতরতার ছবি, প্রবৃত্তির সঙ্গে তার উপলব্ধির সংগ্রামের ছবি।" ১৩ বৈশাখ ১৩০৯ 'ডায়ারি'তে সতীশচন্দ্র এক আত্মসংকটের মুখোমুখি হয়েছিলেন, "আপনাকে পাইতে হইবে। আপনাকে না পাইলে জীবন মিথ্যা। আমি কুলক্রমাগত সংস্কারের, সমাজের দাস হইয়া মুখের মত কেন ফিরিব? ... আমি আপনাকে জানিব। ... আমার প্রাণের প্রাণ, আমার জীবনের চালক প্রতিমূর্ত্তে জাগিয়া থাকুন।" ১৪ আত্মপ্রশ্নের মুখোমুখি দাঁড়িয়ে নিজেকে পাওয়ার আত্মস্তিক আগ্রহে সতীশচন্দ্র সচেতন ছিলেন। এই আত্মানুসন্ধানের তাগিদ ও বেদনাবোধই কি 'চণ্ডালী'র অধিকার মধ্যে ভাষা পেয়েছে? যেখানে সামাজিক কুলপরিচয়ের থেকেও যে কোন নারীর আত্মপরিচয়ের সংকট মূল্যবান প্রশ্ন হয়ে ওঠে? যেখানে সর্বস্ব বিলিয়ে না দিলে জীবনলব্ধ হয়ে থাকা যায় না?

॥ ৪ ॥

প্রতিগ্রহণের অন্যতম গুরুত্বপূর্ণ শর্ত হিসাবে বলা যায় যে পরিচিত সাহিত্যের সাহিত্যিক-ঐতিহাসিক অনুসন্ধানের সঙ্গে যে পাঠ্যে প্রতিগ্রহণ ঘটে তার প্রয়োগগত সম্পর্কটি গুরুত্বপূর্ণ। সৃজনশীল কর্মের মধ্যে সাহিত্যিক প্রত্যাশা থাকে, এর মধ্যকার ইতিহাস ও বাস্তবের ফারাক লক্ষ করা যায়। সমকালীন ইতিহাস ও বাস্তবের প্রেক্ষিতে বৌদ্ধইতিহাস ও বাস্তবের অবতারণা কি ভারতীয় সমস্যা বা স্বরূপের গোড়া ধরে টান মেরেছে? যেখানে সাহিত্যিক প্রতিগ্রহণ সংস্কারগত বদল না পেলে মানব অস্তিত্বগত

ব্যাপকতাকে স্পর্শ করে? তা না হলে কবেকার কাহিনি নিয়ে সতীশচন্দ্র বা রবীন্দ্রনাথই বা লিখবেন কেন? তার আমরই বা আজকের প্রেক্ষিতেও তাকে প্রাসঙ্গিক বলে মনে করছি কেন?

রবীন্দ্র-সমালোচক নেপাল মঞ্জুমদারের মনে হয়েছে, *চণ্ডালিকা*র আখ্যান বৌদ্ধ উপাখ্যান থেকে নেওয়া হলেও এটি মূলত গান্ধিজীর অস্পৃশ্যতা-নিরোধ আন্দোলনের পরিপ্রেক্ষিতেই রচিত হয়েছিল। আবার তিনি এ-ও বলেছেন, নাটকটির সামাজিক ও রাজনৈতিক তাৎপর্য খুব মুখ্যভাবে প্রকটিত হয়ে উঠতে পারেনি।” প্রতিগ্রহণের তত্ত্বানুযায়ী আমাদের ধারণা, *চণ্ডালিকা*’র সমকালীন রাজনৈতিক-সামাজিক ইতিহাসের গতিবিধি টেপটিকে বুঝাতে অনেকখানি সাহায্য করবে। তাই ঐতিহাসিক প্রেক্ষাপটের দিকে আমরা দৃষ্টি দেব।

১৯৩২ সালে রায়সে ম্যাকডোনাল্ড সাম্প্রদায়িক বাঁটোয়ারার (Communal award) প্রস্তাব দেন। যেরবাদা জেলে থাকা গান্ধিজি এর প্রতিবাদে মৃত্যুপণ অনশন শুরু করেন (২০ সেপ্টেম্বর)। ব্রিটিশ প্রধানমন্ত্রী চাচুরের সঙ্গে প্রস্তাবে একটি শর্ত আরোপ করেছিলেন যে বর্ণহিন্দু ও তপশিলী হিন্দুদের আপোসে স্থিরীকৃত সিদ্ধান্ত মেনে নতুন সংবিধান রচিত হবে। ২০ সেপ্টেম্বর সমকালীন সমস্যাসংক্রান্ত রবীন্দ্রবক্তব্য ‘বিচিত্রা’ ও ‘প্রবাসী’র কার্তিক সংখ্যায় প্রকাশিত হয়। রবীন্দ্রনাথ স্পষ্টতই বলেন, “আমাদের রাষ্ট্রিক মূর্ত্তিসাধনা কেবলই বার্থ হচ্ছে এই ভেদবুদ্ধির অভিশাপে।... সামাই মানুষের মূলগত ধর্ম। ...যদি সহজে সাম্য-স্থাপন হয় তবেই রক্ষা, নইলে নির্মূল্যও নেই।”^{২২} ২২ সেপ্টেম্বরই ‘ফ্রি প্রেস’ মারফত তিনি দেশবাসীর উদ্দেশ্যে অস্পৃশ্যতা দূরকরণের আবেদন জানিয়েছিলেন, “The movement should be universal and immediate, its expression clear and indubitable. All manner of humiliation and disabilities from which any class in India suffers should be removed by heroic efforts and self-sacrifice.”^{২৩}

২৪ সেপ্টেম্বর অসুস্থ গান্ধিজিকে দেখতে রবীন্দ্রনাথ সুরেন্দ্রনাথ কর আর অমিয়া চক্রবর্তীকে সঙ্গে নিয়ে পুণা যাত্রা করেন। গান্ধিজীকে সুস্থ দেখেও রাজনৈতিক ব্যাপারে একটা মোটামুটি মীমাংসা হয়েছে মনে করে অক্টোবরের গোড়ায় রবীন্দ্রনাথ শান্তিনিকেতনে ফিরে আসেন। ‘অনুলভ’ সমাজের সঙ্গে বর্ণহিন্দুর যে রফা হল, তা পুণা পার্কে (Poona Pact) নামে খ্যাত। গান্ধিজির অনশনের ফলে যে মীমাংসা হল, তাতে ঐহিক হয় যে অনুলভ সমাজের জন্য জনসংখ্যার অনুপাতে ব্যবস্থাপক সভার সদস্যসংখ্যার পদ সংরক্ষিত থাকবে এবং যুক্ত নির্বাচন অর্থাৎ বর্ণহিন্দু ও তপশিলীদের

যুক্ত ভোটের দ্বারা 'সাধারণ' ও তপশিলীদের যুক্ত ভোটের দ্বারা 'সাধারণ' ও তপশিলী সদস্যরা নির্বাচিত হবেন।" রবীন্দ্রনাথ আশ্রমে ফিরে সুধীরচন্দ্র করের নেতৃত্বে 'সংস্কার সমিতি' স্থাপন করে ১৫ অগ্রহায়ণ ১৩৩৯-এ বিজ্ঞপ্তি প্রকাশ করেন। সমিতির উদ্দেশ্যগুলি হল—

“১। কাহাকেও আমরা সামাজিকভাবে হীন মনে করিব না, অস্পৃশ্য করিয়া রাখিব না। সকল জাতিকেই জল-চল করিয়া লইতে হইবে।

২। সাধারণ মন্দির, পূজার স্থান ও জলাশয় সকলের জন্যই সমানভাবে উন্মুক্ত হইবে।

৩। বিদ্যালয়, তীর্থক্ষেত্র, সভাসমিতি প্রভৃতিতে কোথাও কাহারও আসিবার কোন বাধা থাকিবে না।

৪। কাহারও জাতি লক্ষ্য করিয়া আত্মসম্মানে আঘাত দিবার অন্যায় ব্যবস্থা সমাজে থাকিবে না।” অবৈতনিকে শান্তিনিকেতন ও শ্রীনিকেতনে দুর্গতদের ছেলে রেখে অন্যান্য ছেলেদের সঙ্গে সমভাবে শিক্ষা দিয়ে তাদের মধ্যে থেকেই ভাবকর্মী ও কেন্দ্রপরিচালক তৈরি করা কবির ইচ্ছা ছিল।”

রবীন্দ্রনাথ-গান্ধিজির পারস্পরিক প্রীতি শ্রদ্ধার সম্পর্ক সুবিদিত, অথচ একমাত্র অস্পৃশ্যতাবিরোধী আন্দোলন ছাড়া গান্ধিজির কোন আন্দোলনকেই রবীন্দ্রনাথ সমর্থন করেননি। এক গভীর সামাজিক ও মানবিক দায়বদ্ধতা থেকে কবিকর্মী রবীন্দ্রনাথ অস্পৃশ্যতাবিরোধী আন্দোলনের শরিক হয়েছিলেন। জনমানসের মধ্যে সচেতনতা ও শিল্প-সৌন্দর্যবোধকে জাগিয়ে তোলার জন্যই কি তিনি আনন্দ-প্রকৃতির কাহিনীকে নতুন করে বিন্যস্ত করে ‘চণ্ডালিকা’ লিখলেন?

॥ ৫ ॥

সতীশচন্দ্রের ‘চণ্ডালী’র পর রবীন্দ্রনাথের ‘চণ্ডালিকা’ দীর্ঘ ত্রিশ বছরের প্রতীক্ষার ফল। ‘চণ্ডালিকা’র আগে ‘খেয়া’ কাব্যগ্রন্থের ‘কুয়ার ধারে’ আর ‘পরিশেষ’ কাব্যগ্রন্থের ‘জলপাত্র’ কবিতাদ্বয়ে চণ্ডালিকার পূর্ববর্তী ভাববীজ লক্ষ করা যাবে।

‘কুয়ার ধারে’ কবিতায় আনমনা-অনান্নীকে উদ্দেশ্য করে করুণদৃষ্টিতে ক্রান্ত পাশ্চ তাঁর তৃষাকাতরতার কথা জানান। পাশ্চর ডাক শুনে চমকে উঠে অনামিকা তাঁর করপুটে জলধারা ঢেলে দিয়ে তৃষ্ণানিবারণ করে। পত্রমর্মর, কোকিলের কুহস্বর, বাবলা গন্ধে প্রকৃতিতে কীসের এক ব্যাকুলতা জাগে, আর সেই ব্যাকুলতা সঞ্চারিত হয় অনামিকার মনেও। পাশ্চ জলদাত্রীর নাম জিগেস করলে সে বড় লজ্জায় নীরব থাকে। এই নীরবতাই

জাগিয়ে তোলে কিছু সংশয়, কিছু সন্দাবনাও। অনামিকার মনের তলে আকাঙ্ক্ষা জেগে ওঠে—

তোমার মনে থাকার মতো

করেছি কোন্ কাজ।

পাখি অনামিকাকে একবার মাএ ডাক দিয়েছিলেন, সেই ডাক তার মনে দোলা দিয়ে গেছে। পাখি আর এসেছিলেন কিনা আমরা জানতে পারি না, কিন্তু কুয়ার ধারে দুপুরবেলার অলসপ্রহরে অনামিকা অনন্ত প্রতীক্ষা নিয়েই বসে থাকে। অনামিকার জবানিতে বলা এই কবিতায় খণ্ডকালের জলদানের অভিধাতে নিত্যকালের প্রতীক্ষার সুর ধরা পড়েছে।

‘কুয়ার ধারে’ কবিতার অনামিকার অব্যক্ত ভাবপ্রকাশের ব্যাকুলতা সঞ্চারিত হয়েছে ‘জলপাত্র’ কবিতায়। এক্ষেত্রে সাম্প্রদায়িক বাঁটোয়ারার প্রেক্ষাপটটি স্বভাবতই আমাদের স্মরণপথে আসবে। অনামিকা এখানে নিজেকে ‘হীন’ আর তৃষাতুর পাখিকে উদ্দেশ্য করে ‘প্রভু’, ‘পূজনীয়’, ‘দীননাথ’ বলেছেন। অনামিকা নিজের অন্তর্জ জাতিসত্তা বিষয়ে স্পর্শকাতর। আত্মগ্লানি সত্ত্বেও সে পাখিকে জিগেস করেছে, কেন হীন জাতির জেনেও সবার দরজা ফেলে, কোন্ দুঃখে তিনি তার কাছে এলেন? দ্বিপ্রহরে পথিক তার থেকে তুষানিবারণার্থে জল প্রার্থনা করলে সে ‘প্রভু’কে হেয় করার ভয়ে কুণ্ঠিত হয়েছে। অপরাধবোধের কুঠায় সে পথিকের পদপ্রান্তে পূর্ণকৃত্ত রেখেছে, করপুটে জলদান করার স্পর্ধা দেখায়নি। ‘বিশ্বজয়ী’ পাখি অনামিকার প্রতি দৃষ্টিপাত করে হাস্যমুখে বলেন,

হে মৃগ্ময়ী,

পুণ্য যথা মূর্তিকার এই বসুন্ধরা

শ্যামল কাস্তিতে ভরা

সেই মতো তুমি

লক্ষ্মীর আসন, তাঁর কমলচরণ আছ চুমি।

সুন্দরের কোন জাত নাই,

মুক্ত সে সদাই।

পাখি অনামিকাকে দিলেন পরিচয়ের মধ্যে অপরিচয়ের বিস্ময়বিমুক্ত দৃষ্টি। তিনি জলভরা মেঘমল্লস্বরে সৌন্দর্যের নিত্যশুচিতার বাণী জাগিয়ে গেলেন—

শতদল পঙ্কজের জাতি নেই কোনো।

যার মাঝে প্রকাশিত স্বর্গের নিম্নল অভিষ্কৃতি

সেও কি অণ্ডি।

বিধাতা প্রসন্ন যেথা আপনার হাতের সৃষ্টিতে

নিভা তার অভিষেক নিখিলের অশিসবৃষ্টিতে।

পাশ্চ অনামিকাকে যে আত্মোদ্‌বোধনের মন্ত্র দান করলেন তাতে 'হীনা'র মধ্যে অশ্চর্য এক পরিবর্তন আনল। তার মধ্যে এল আত্মশ্রদ্ধা। এল আত্মদিকাক্ষের নিষ্ঠা, সংযম ও সৌন্দর্যবোধ। যে অস্ত্রঃসৌন্দর্যে সে নিজেকে পরতে পরতে সাজিয়ে তুলল তা পাত্থের উদ্দেশ্যেই উৎসর্গীকৃত হল। কৃতজ্ঞতায় নম্র অনামিকার কণ্ঠে ধ্বনিত হল আত্মনিবেদন সুর, দেহপাত্রই হ'ল অর্ঘ্য—

হে মহান, নেমে এসে তুমি যারে করেছ গ্রহণ,

সৌন্দর্য্যের অর্ঘ্য তার তোমা-পানে করুক বহন।

'পাশ্চ'রূপী 'জীবননাথ'-এর উদ্দেশ্যে সর্বস্ব সমর্পণে, অনামিকার হীনচেতনা নিত্যকালের সৌন্দর্যচেতনায় উত্তরণ ঘটে। পঙ্কের মধ্যে থেকে পঙ্কজ যেমন আলোর অভিসারে ফুটে উঠে শোভনসুন্দর হয়, ঠিক তেমনি আত্মসংকটের বোধ কীসের আবেগে আলোকভিত্তিসারী হয়, সযত্নে ফুটিয়ে তোলে 'সৌন্দর্যের অর্ঘ্য', আর তা অন্তরতমের উদ্দেশ্যেই উৎসর্গীকৃত হয়ে আপনাতেই আপনি পূর্ণ হয়ে ওঠে!

॥ ৬ ॥

'চণ্ডালিকা' নাটক মুখ্যত প্রকৃতি আর আনন্দের বান্দিকতার দর্পণ। সতীশচন্দ্র 'শার্দূলকামৃত'র আনন্দ আর প্রকৃতির চরিত্রাক্ষে প্রকৃতির নাম বদলে রাখলেন 'অম্বিকা'। রবীন্দ্রনাথ 'কুমার ধারে' আর 'জলপাত্র' কবিতায় নায়ক-নায়িকার নামপ্রদানে বিরত থাকলেন। আবার 'চণ্ডালিকা'য় তিনি মূলানুগভাবে 'শার্দূলকামৃত' কেই অনুসরণ করলেন। বৈশালী নগরীর অন্ত্যজ চণ্ডালকন্যা প্রকৃতি প্রথর আত্মমর্যাদা আর তীব্র স্পর্শকাতরতায় গড়া এক বিরোধিণী প্রেমিকারূপে চিত্রিত হল।

বুদ্ধের প্রিয়শিষ্য আনন্দ শাক্যবংশীয় রাজপুত্র। শাক্যসিংহের পিতৃব্য অমিতোদনের পুত্র। অনিন্দ্যসুন্দর রাজকুমার আনন্দ সর্বাদ্রসৌষ্ঠব, সর্বশাস্ত্রবিদ। শাক্যরাজ্যে বুদ্ধ ধর্মচক্রপ্রবর্তনার্থে এলে আনন্দ প্রব্রজ্যা নেন। বুদ্ধের শেষ পঞ্চবিংশতিবর্ষ আনন্দ আর নিত্যসহচর ও প্রধান সেবক ছিলেন। বুদ্ধ তাঁকে প্রগোষ্ঠরের সহায়তায় প্রতীত্যাসমুৎপাদ তত্ত্ব ব্যাখ্যা করেন। ভিক্ষুণী সংঘের প্রতিষ্ঠালাগে প্রাথমিক উদ্যোগপর্বে আনন্দ ছিলেন প্রধান সহায়ক। প্রব্রজ্যালাভের পর দীর্ঘদিন অর্হহুলাভ না করলেও তাঁর চরিত্র বর্ধবধ ওৎপালীর দ্বারা অলংকৃত ছিল। ফলে তিনি (ক) বুদ্ধের প্রধান সেনাপতি; (খ) 'দর্মভাণ্ডাগারিক'

বা ‘ধর্মরত্ন ভাণ্ডারের অধ্যক্ষ’, (গ) ‘অগ্র স্মৃতিমান’, (ঘ) ‘অগ্র গতিমান’, (ঙ) ‘অগ্রযুতিমান’ উপাধি লাভ করেন। বুদ্ধের দেশনা আবৃত্তিতে, অনুশীলনে, প্রদানে এবং বুদ্ধের প্রতি অগাধ শ্রদ্ধা, ভক্তি ও সহিষ্ণুতায় তিনি অদ্বিতীয়। শাস্তা বুদ্ধ শ্রাবস্তীর জেতবন বিহারের ধর্মসভায় চারিপারিষদের উপস্থিতিতে আনন্দকে সর্বশ্রেষ্ঠ বলে ঘোষণা করেন। বুদ্ধের মহাপরিনির্বাণের একমাত্র সঙ্গী আনন্দ। প্রথম সঙ্গীতিতে তাঁর উপস্থিতির অপরিহার্যতা প্রমাণিত। ৫৪৫ খ্রিষ্টপূর্বাব্দে শ্রাবণী পূর্ণিমায় তিনি অর্হত্ত্ব লাভ করেন। শতবর্ষজীবী এই অর্হৎ রোহিনীন্দীর তীরে মহাপরিনির্বাণ লাভ করেন।^{১০}

॥ ৭ ॥

‘চণ্ডালিকা’র শিল্পকৌশলের মূল্যায়ন করে আবু সয়ীদ আইয়ুব বলেছেন, রবীন্দ্রনাথের ‘চণ্ডালিকা’ পাঠকালে হিন্দুসমাজের অস্পৃশ্যতার কলুষমাচনে বুদ্ধের মহৎ প্রচেষ্টা, নীতিকথা, ধর্মকথার চেয়েও প্রকৃতি ও আনন্দের ‘মানসিক পট পরিবর্তন এবং চারিত্রিক সংঘাতের ইতিবৃত্ত’ অনেক বড় হয়ে ওঠে। আনন্দের মানসিক সংগ্রাম এবং ত্রমিক পরাজয়ের চিত্রপরিচ্ছন্নকে প্রকৃতির মায়াদর্পণে দেখানোর কৌশল ‘নাটককে আরো নিবিড়’ করে তুলেছে। “চণ্ডালিকা ডাইড্যাক্টিক নাটক নয়। নীতিশিক্ষা আর রসরূপের সম্পূর্ণ অঙ্গীভূত। এবং অত্যন্ত ক্ষুদ্রাঙ্গ।”^{১১} শব্দ ঘোষ এ প্রসঙ্গে বলেছেন, রবীন্দ্রনাথ এখানে জাতের প্রশ্ন এনেছেন ঠিকই, কিন্তু সামাজিক সমস্যাটিকেই লক্ষ্যবিন্দু করে তোলেননি, ‘পৌছে দিতে চেয়েছেন আত্মসমস্যা’।^{১২}

‘চণ্ডালিকা’ নাটকটি দুটি দৃশ্যে বিভক্ত। পীতবসনধারী বৌদ্ধ ভিক্ষু আনন্দকে প্রথম দর্শনেই চণ্ডালিনী প্রকৃতির মনে ভাবরতি জেগে উঠেছে। ভাবরতি অসম্প্রয়োগবিষয়া রতির অন্তর্গত।^{১৩} যত সময় অতিক্রান্ত হয়েছে, প্রকৃতির ভাবরতি সৌহার্দ্যকে পাশ কাটিয়ে প্রীতির প্রতি ধাবিত হয়েছে। ভিক্ষু আনন্দের প্রতি প্রকৃতির যে তীব্র পাশন আর আকাঙ্ক্ষা তাকে বাহ্যগোচরশূন্য যুক্তিহীন অবুঝ করে তুলেছে। যে কোন প্রকারে যে প্রিয়কে পেতে চেয়েছে। তার এই আচরণ কি অসম্প্রয়োগবিষয়া রতিকে অতিক্রমকারী অনুভব অর্থাৎ সঙ্গমেচ্ছা চিত্তরঞ্জক ঈজার ইঙ্গিত নিয়ে আসছে?

আনন্দের ‘জল দাও’ ধনিমালা প্রকৃতির উষর মনে অনন্ত আকাঙ্ক্ষা জাগিয়ে তুলেছে। ভিক্ষুর কথামতো জাতপাতের প্রশ্ন তার কাছে অবাস্তব হয়ে গেছে। প্রকৃতি ‘চোখের আলোয়’ তাকে ‘আপন জাতের’ বলেই চিনে নিয়েছে। ‘আত্মনিন্দা পাপ, আত্মত্যাগ চোখে পেশি’, তাই প্রকৃতি আত্মনিন্দা পরিহার করে আত্মোদ্বেগধনের পথ গ্রহণে। ‘তোরা পেলোকার আলো’ ‘এপা আনন্দ পলকাত্তে সমানাদিকার গুণ্ডতা স্নিগ্ধতার

কথা শুনিয়েছেন। অশ্রুত ও অভূতপূর্ব পরিচয়ে প্রকৃতির জন্মান্তর ঘটল। ‘নতুন জন্মের পালা’য় প্রকৃতির কথার ধরণ পাল্টে যায়। প্রকৃতির কথার মধ্যে এক দ্বন্দ্ব লক্ষ করা যায়। কখনো তার আত্মবিশ্বাস তুঙ্গে, আবার পরমহুর্তেই আনন্দনির্ভরতা। দৃষ্টান্তস্বরূপ বলা যায়, প্রকৃতি বলেছে, “সমস্ত শ্রাবস্তীনগরে আর কি কোথাও জল ছিল না....এলেন কেন এই কুয়োরাই ধারে।... আমাকে দান করতে এলেন মানুষের তৃষ্ণা মেটাবার শিরোপা। এই মহাপুণ্যই ঝুঁজিলেন। যে-জলে ব্রত হল পূর্ণ সে-জল তো আর কোথাও পেতেন না, কোনো তীর্থেই না।” আত্মাভিমानी প্রকৃতির কণ্ঠে আবার ঠিক বিপরীত বোঝা লক্ষণীয়, “যিনি চিনেছেন তিনি চেনাবেন। তাই আছি ভাকিয়ে।” সে অনুরাগবীক্ষণের আলোয় আনন্দের মধোই ‘বিশ্বের সকল পথের সব পথিককে ঝুঁজে পেল। ভিক্ষু বিদায়কালে কোন প্রত্যাবর্তনের কোন কথা দিয়ে যাননি। অথচ প্রকৃতিকে এক আশ্চর্যভাবনা পেয়ে বসে, “কোনো কথা না বলে তবু কথা দিয়ে গিয়েছিলেন, কিন্তু রাখলেন না কেন কথা।”

‘আত্মদীপ’ হয়ে ওঠার মন্ত্ৰ কি প্রকৃতি প্রথমবার আনন্দের কাছ থেকে পেয়েছে? তা নয়, প্রকৃতির নিজের মধ্যেও আত্মদীপরূপে জ্বলে ওঠার বীজ ছিল। যেমন, প্রকৃতির রূপে মুগ্ধ হয়ে এক রাজপুত্র তাকে গ্রহণ করতে চেয়েছিল, কিন্তু সে তা প্রত্যাখ্যান করেছে। ‘সোনার শিকলে’ বাঁধা পত্তর মত নয়, মানুষের সহজাত অধিকার নিয়েই সে বাঁচতে চেয়েছে। ১৩ অগ্রহায়ণ ১৮৮৭তে লেখা ‘নিষ্ফল কামনা’ কবিতায় ধ্বনিত হয়েছিল, ‘ক্ষুধা মিটাবার খাদ্য নহে যে মানব’,^{১০} সেই ভাবনারই সম্প্রসারিত রূপ আমরা প্রকৃতির কণ্ঠে পেয়েছি। প্রকৃতিকে মোহিনী নারীরূপে নয়, মানুষরূপে আনন্দই প্রথম স্বীকৃতি দিয়েছেন, এতদিনের অচেনার স্তূপ ঠেলে সত্যদর্শন করেছেন, সত্যদ্রষ্টা আনন্দের উদ্দেশে প্রকৃতি ‘প্রণাম’ জানিয়েছে—

ওগো, তোমার চক্ষু দিয়ে মেলে সত্যদৃষ্টি

আমার সত্যরূপ প্রথম করেছ সৃষ্টি।

সত্যদৃষ্টিতে উদ্ভাসিত প্রকৃতির মধ্যে জেগেছে আত্মপ্রত্যয়,

আমি তরুণ অরুণলেখা,

আমি বিমল জ্যোতির রেখা,

আমি নবীন শ্যামল মেখে

প্রথম প্রসাদগুণি।

আনন্দের প্রেরণায় সে ‘আত্মনিদাপাণ’ থেকে উদ্ধার পেতে চেয়েছে। জন্মগত বৈষম্যের প্রবলভাবে অস্বীকার করে বলেছে, “গাফিলত ঘরে রাত চাওয়ায় অস্বাভাবিক

দেশে দেশে, আমি নই চণ্ডাল।” এ প্রসঙ্গে ‘ধন্যপদ’-এর ‘ব্রাহ্মণবর্ণগো’র পদটি উদ্ধারযোগ্য—

ন জটাই ন হোন্তেহি ন জম্বা হোতি ব্রাহ্মণো,
যমিহ সচ্চক্ষ ধন্যো চ সো সূচী সো চ ব্রাহ্মণো।”

অর্থাৎ, জটাজুট পরে, গোত্র এবং জাতি দিয়ে নয়, যিনি চার আৰ্যসভ্য খোঁড়শ প্রকারে দর্শন করেছেন ও নব লোকোত্তর ধর্ম পরিজ্ঞাত—তিনি শুচি এবং প্রকৃত ব্রাহ্মণ। বৌদ্ধ কর্মবাদকে রাবীন্দ্রিক প্রকৃতি আত্মস্থ করেছে, তাই জন্মসূত্রে বদলে কর্মসূত্রে ব্রাহ্মণত্ব লাভের পক্ষে সে সওয়াল করতে পেরেছে।

আনন্দের ‘ডাক’ প্রকৃতির চিস্তন ও কর্মপ্রক্রিয়ায় আমূল পরিবর্তন ঘটিয়েছে। প্রকৃতির আকাঙ্ক্ষা মেটাতে তার মা বাহিক আনুষ্ঠানিকতার আশ্রয় নিতে চায়। অন্যদিকে প্রকৃতির কাছে এসব অর্থহীন, সে অন্তরের উৎস্বল থেকে ব্যথার ডাক পাঠাতে উৎসুক—

না না, ডাকব না, ডাকব না, অমন করে বাইরে থেকে,
পারি যদি অন্তরে তার ডাক পাঠাব, আনব ডেকে।

সংবেদনময় দানের জন্য প্রকৃতি উন্মুখ, কিন্তু নেবার মানুষ কোথায়? তাঁর অনাদ্যন্ত চলার পথ যে প্রকৃতির অচেনা। তাই সে ‘দেওয়া-নেওয়ার মিলন’ সম্পর্কে সংশয়দীর্ঘ তবুও প্রত্যাশী—

মিলবে না কি মোর বেদনা তার বেদনাতে
গঙ্গাধারা মিশবে না কি কালো যমুনাতে।

পবিত্র গঙ্গাধারারূপে আনন্দ কি কালো যমুনারূপ প্রেমদী প্রকৃতির সঙ্গে একীভূত হবে? কিন্তু প্রকৃতির প্রাণে একবার চকিতে সেই প্রত্যাশা জেগেছিল—

আপনি কী সুর উঠল বেজে
আপনা হতে এসেছে যে,

গেল যখন আশার বচন গেছে রেখে।

প্রিয়সমাগমের আকাঙ্ক্ষায় প্রকৃতি মাঠে মস্ত পড়ে আনন্দকে টেনে আনতে গেলোছে। সে ‘সর্বনাশী’র মত ‘আগুন নিয়ে খেলা’য় মস্ত। চকিতের আত্মদোষোদ্ধারণ তাকে যে ‘নবজন্ম’ দিয়েছে তা রক্ষা করতেই সে মরিয়া হয়ে উঠেছে। ভয়হীন ভয়ে, আগ্নেয়গিরির ক্ষতবিক্ষত প্রকৃতির কণ্ঠে উৎকণ্ঠা ধরা পড়েছে, “ভয় করি, আবার যাব নোমে, আগুন আপনাকে ভুলব, আবার ঢুকব আঁধার কোঠায়। সে যে মরণের বাড়ি।” সে গঙ্গাধারা-সুগন্ধের ‘দায়’ ঝাঁকান করে সর্বত্র বিলিয়ে জীবনসর্বস্ব প্রিয়তম আনন্দকেই

পেতে চেয়েছে। আত্মনির্ভরতা আর প্রিয়নির্ভরতা মিলেমিশে পারস্পরিক নির্ভরতা
তার কণ্ঠে ধ্বনিত হয়েছে—

আমি তারেই জানি তারেই জানি
 আমায় যে জন আপন জানে—
তারি দানে দাবি আমার
 যার অধিকার আমার দানে।
যে আমারে চিনতে পারে
সেই চেনাতেই চিনি তারে,
একই আলো চেনার পথে
 তার প্রাণে আর আমার প্রাণে।

কি এই আলো যা পথ চেনায়? ১২৯২ অগ্রহায়ণে লেখা ‘পথপ্রান্তে’ প্রবন্ধে এর
হৃদিশ পাওয়া সম্ভব। কবির মত, প্রেম আমাদেরকে ভিতর থেকে বাইরে, আপন থেকে
অনো, এক থেকে আর-একের দিকে এগিয়ে দেয়, তাই তা ‘পথের আলো’।^{২২} প্রকৃতি
‘আঁখিপাখি’ প্রেমরূপ ‘পথের আলো’য় পথ চিনে প্রিয়ের ‘আলো-করা মুখের’ উদ্দেশে
ধাবমান হয়েছে।

॥ ৮ ॥

করুণাঘন তথাগতর প্রিয়শিষ্য আনন্দকে মস্ত্র পড়ে টেনে আনার পাপ থেকে প্রকৃতিকে
বিরত করতে চেয়েও তার মা বার্থ হয়। সাত্ত্বনহীন শান্তির বিধানকে সে অস্বীকার
করেছে, পুণ্যবান আনন্দ তাঁর নিজ ঔদার্যে প্রকৃতির অপরাধপূর্ণ ভালি শূন্য করে তাতে
করুণায় ভরে দেবেন—এই প্রত্যাশায় সে গেয়েছে—

তুমি উচ্চ, আমি তুচ্ছ—
 ধরব তোমার ফাঁদে
 আমার অপরাধে।
আমার দোষকে তোমার পুণ্য
করার তো কলঙ্কশূন্য,
ক্ষমায় গেঁথে সকল ক্রটি
 গলায় তোমার পরো ॥

লক্ষণীয়, উচ্চ-তুচ্ছর আপাত স্তরবিনি্যাসের আড়ালে এক প্রেমিকার রক্তিম
বাসনাঘন মন ত্রিফাশীল। পায়ের তলায় থাক: ‘স্নানকুসুম’ কী আর স্নান থাকবে যদি

তা প্রেমিকের কণ্ঠলয় হয়? প্রাণ-তার চরিত্রাঙ্কনের পরাকর্ষের সৌন্দর্যময় প্রকাশ এর চেয়ে আর কাঁই না হতে পারে?

‘জল দাও’—আনন্দের ঐটুকু তেজোময় বাণী প্রকৃতির সমস্ত জন্ম ‘আলো’ করে দেয়। বর্ণবিভক্ত সমাজের আগল ভেঙে আনন্দ চণ্ডালিকার কাছ থেকে জলগ্রহণ করার ‘সাহস’ দেখিয়েছেন, অন্যদিকে প্রকৃতিও বহুকালের সংস্কারকে পেরিয়ে জলদান করে ‘সাহস’-এর পরিচয় রেখেছে। পরের দিন আনন্দ প্রকৃতির পাশ দিয়ে চলে গেলেও তার দিকে দৃষ্টিপাত পর্যন্ত করেন নি। অস্তর্ভূত আর আত্মগ্লানিত ক্ষতবিক্ষত প্রকৃতির মনে জাগে সংশয়, প্রশ্ন। প্রচণ্ড আত্মাভিমান সে আনন্দের সার্বিক পরাজয় কামনা করে। পরক্ষণেই প্রিয়তমের প্রত্যাবর্তনের জন্য উন্মূখ হয়ে ওঠে তার মন-প্রাণ, সর্বস্বত্যাগী কলঙ্কিনী হতেও তার বিধা নেই। ১৩১৭র পৌষে লেখা একটি গানে প্রেমিকার আকৃতি এক্ষেত্রে উদ্ধারযোগ্য—

আমি তোমার প্রেমে হব সবার কলঙ্কভাগী।

আমি সকল দাগে হব দাগি।^{২৫}

৩০ সেপ্টেম্বর ১৯২৩-এ লেখা ‘পশ্চিমযাত্রীর ডায়ারি’তে রবীন্দ্রনাথ ‘মেয়েদের যথার্থ অভিসারিকা’র সম্মান দিয়েছেন। তিনি আবার এও বলেছেন ‘সংসারস্থিতির লক্ষ্মী’ মেয়েদের মত ‘সংসার ছারখার করবার প্রলয়ংকারীও’ আর কেউ নেই।^{২৬} ১৫ ফেব্রুয়ারি ১৯২৫-এ তিনি লিখেছেন, “...নারীর প্রেম পুরুষকে পূর্ণশক্তিতে জাগ্রত করতে পারে; কিন্তু সে-প্রেম যদি গুরুপক্ষের না হয়ে কৃষ্ণপক্ষের হয় তবে তার মালিনোর আর তুলনা নেই।”^{২৭} প্রকৃতির প্রেমের মধ্যে নারীর কলাণীরূপ নয়, প্রলয়ংকারী, আত্মক্ষয়ী, মালিন্যময় রূপ ধরা পড়েছে। প্রকৃতি মায়াদর্পণের জাদুবিদ্যার সাহায্যে আনন্দকে পেতে চেয়েছে। মায়ামুকুটের ব্যবহার রবীন্দ্রনাথ এর আগেও ফাল্গুন ১২৯৮য় লেখা ‘বিশ্ববতী’ কবিতায় করেছিলেন। রাণী সযত্নচর্চিত হয়ে ‘মায়াময় কনকদর্পণ’-এ মগ্ন পড়ে প্রশ্ন করেছিলেন...

...কহো মোরে সত্য করি

সর্বশ্রেষ্ঠ রূপসী কে ধরায় বিরাজে।

ফুটিয়া উঠিল ধীরে মুকুরের মাঝে

মধুমাখা হাসি-আঁকা একখানি মুখ,

দেখিয়া বিনারি গেল মহিষীর বুক—

রাজকন্যা বিশ্ববতী সতিনের মোয়ে,

ধরাতলে রূপসী সে সবাকার চেয়ে!^{২৮}

মায়ামুকুর ঈজিত বস্ত্রপ্রাপ্তি ও মঙ্গলাকাঙ্ক্ষার জন্য ব্যবহৃত হত। সৈয়দ ইব্রিশ শা এ সম্পর্কে বলেছেন, মায়ামুকুরের সাহায্যে অশরীরী আত্মার সঙ্গে সহযোগের মাধ্যমে ঈজিতবস্ত্রের প্রাপ্তি ঘটে।^{১১} 'চণ্ডালিকা'য় প্রকৃতি চেয়েছিল, 'মহাপ্রাণ' আনন্দ তার কাছ থেকে 'হৃদয়সমুদ্রের জল' চাইবেন। মায়ামুকুরের মাধ্যমে প্রকৃতি আনন্দের 'মরণান্তিক যুদ্ধ' দেখেছে। প্রথম দিন দৈত্যের সঙ্গে সংগ্রামরত ক্রান্ত দেবতার ফ্যাকাশে মুখের মত আর দ্বিতীয় দিন আলোহীনতায় অসীম দুঃখের মূর্তিতে আনন্দকে সে দেখেছিল। এই অংশে নারীর প্রেমের প্রলয়ংকারী রূপই পরিদৃশ্যমান হয়েছে।

॥ ৯ ॥

'চণ্ডালিকা'য় শিবের প্রসঙ্গ কয়েকবার এসেছে। প্রথম দৃশ্য - আনন্দকে পাওয়ার জন্য উমারূপী প্রকৃতি কচ্ছুসাধনেও প্রস্তুত। শিবের অনুযঙ্গ প্রকৃতির কথনে ধরা পড়েছে, 'সেবিকা আমি, এই কথাটি নিন তুলে ধুলোর থেকে তাঁর বুকের কাছে। এই ধুতরো ফুলটাকে'। নীলকণ্ঠসম আনন্দের 'বুকের কাছে' ধুতরা ফুলের মতো প্রকৃতি দুলুনি থাকে—এর চেয়ে চরম প্রেমাকাঙ্ক্ষা আর কীই-বা থাকতে পারে? প্রিয়সমাগমের আকাঙ্ক্ষায় প্রকৃতি মনের মধ্যে 'প্রলয়ের রাত্রি, মিলনের ঝড়, ভাঙনের আনন্দ' অনুভব করেছিল। তার গানে শিববাদ্যের নাদ ধ্বনিত হয়েছে 'হৃদয়ে মন্ত্রিল ডমক গুরুগুরু'। চণ্ডালীমায়ের মন্ত্রপ্রভাবে আনন্দের সংকটকালে শিবমূর্তির চিহ্নই দৃশ্যমান। প্রকৃতি মা'কে বলেছে, "যে পাবক দিয়ে তিনি (আনন্দ) ঢেকেছেন আপনাকে তোর অগ্নিনাগিনী ফৌস ক'রে তাকে ছোবল মারছে, চলছে দ্বন্দ্বযুদ্ধ।"

আনন্দকে মায়ামুকুরের সাহায্যে দেখে প্রকৃতির তন্তুঃস্থলে মহা আলোড়ন চলে, জাগে ভয়োত্তীর্ণ অনুভূতি, "সৃষ্টির দেবতা প্রলয়ের দেবতার চেয়ে ভয়ংকর... তাঁর পায়ের সামনে—প্রাণ না মৃত্যু? আমার মনে ফুলতে লাগল একটা আনন্দ।...নতুন সৃষ্টির বিরাট বৈরাগ্য। ভাবনা নেই, ভয় নেই, দয়া নেই, দুঃখ নেই—ভাঙছে, জ্বলে উঠেছে, গলে যাচ্ছে, ছিটকে পড়ছে স্কুলিঙ্গ।... সমস্ত শরীর-মন নেচে নেচে উঠল অগ্নিশিখার মতো।" প্রকৃতির মনের প্রস্ফুটিত ভাবে সৃষ্টি ও সংহারের দেবতা শিবের প্রভাব স্পষ্ট। এ প্রসঙ্গে নটরাজ শিবের নদন্ত নৃত্য সম্পর্কিত আনন্দ কুমারস্বামীর বক্তব্যটি উদ্ধারযোগ্য : "The dance, in fact, represents His five activities (*Pancakritya*), viz : *Srishti* (overlooking, creation, evolution), *Sthiti* (preservation, support), *Samhara* (destruction, evolution), *Tirobhava* (veiling, embodiment, illusion, and also, giving rest), *Anugraha* (release, salvation, grace)."

এই নৃত্যের কেন্দ্রীয় মোটিফ আরো বলা যায়, “Creation arises from the drum: protection proceeds from the hand of hope: from fire proceeds destruction : the foot held aloft gives release.” It will be observed that the fourth hand points to this lifted foot, the refuge of the soul.” ^{১০} এর সঙ্গে শ্রাবণ ১৩১১-য় লেখা রবীন্দ্রনাথের ‘পাগল’ প্রবন্ধের প্রাসঙ্গিক অংশটি উদ্ধারযোগ্য, “শব্দ, তোমার নৃত্যে তোমার দক্ষিণ ও বাম পদক্ষেপে সংসারে মহাপুণ্য ও মহাপাপ উৎক্ষিপ্ত হইয়া উঠে। সংসারের উপরে প্রতিদিনের জড়হস্তক্ষেপে যে-একটা সামান্যতার একটানা আবরণ পড়িয়া যায়, ভালোমন্দ দুয়েরই প্রবল আঘাতে তুমি তাহাকে ছিন্নবিচ্ছিন্ন করিতে থাক ও প্রাণের প্রবাহকে অপ্রত্যাশিতের উত্তেজনায় ক্রমাগত তরঙ্গিত করিয়া শক্তির নব নব লীলা ও সৃষ্টির নব নব মূর্তি প্রকাশ করিয়া তোল।” ^{১১} প্রকৃতির কণ্ঠে শংকরবন্দনা অভিনবধ্ব পেয়েছে—

হে মহাদুঃখ, হে রুদ্ধ, হে ভয়ংকর,

ওহে শংকর, হে প্রলয়ংকর।

হোক জটানিঃসৃত অঘিভূজঙ্গম—

দংশনে জর্জর স্বাবর জঙ্গম,

ঘন ঘন ঝন-ঝন, ঝন-নন ঝন-নন

পিণাক টংকারো ॥

শিব সৃষ্টি ও সংহারের দেবতা যেমন, তেমনি রবীন্দ্রনাথের দৃষ্টিতে তাঁর নিবিড় পরিচয় প্রেমের দেবতারূপে।

প্রকৃতির দৃষ্টিতে শ্রাবক আনন্দের সুদূরাভিসারী দৃষ্টি ধরা পড়েছিল, ‘তাঁর অনিমেষ দৃষ্টি বহুদূরে তাকিয়ে, গোখুলিআকাশের তারার মতো’। ২৭ আশ্বিন ১৩০৬-এ লেখা ‘নগরলক্ষ্মী’ কবিতায় শান্তা বুদ্ধের দৃষ্টির কথা আমাদের স্মরণপথে আসবে—

বুদ্ধের করুণ আঁখি দুটি

সঙ্ক্যাতরসম রহে ফুটি। ^{১২}

বুদ্ধ ও শিবমূর্তির সাদৃশ্যের কথাও এক্ষেত্রে স্মরণযোগ্য।

॥ ১০ ॥

প্রকৃতির দুঃখ-বেদনার সহমর্মী হয়েছেন আনন্দ। বর্ণবৈষম্যের বেদনাবোধের প্রসঙ্গটি স্মরণে রাখা প্রয়োজন। অশান্ত প্রকৃতি বড় অসহায়তায় বলেছে তা গভীর ইস্তিবহ, “যতদিন না প্রাণের দুঃখ শান্ত হবে, ততদিন দুঃখ তাঁকে দেবই। আমি মুক্তি যদি না

পাই তিনি মুক্তি পাবেন কী করে।” প্রকৃতি আনন্দের প্রতি পূণ্যাবানদের তুষিত স্বর্গলোক টলানোর ক্ষমতাসম্পন্ন ‘বসুন্ধরামন্ত্র’ প্রয়োগ করিয়েছিল। এই উগ্রকর্মের পিছনে দীর্ঘদিনের প্রবঞ্চনা ক্রিয়াশীল বলে মনে হয়। নিজের পাশাপাশি বসুন্ধরার প্রতি বঞ্চনার ক্ষোভ আর অধিকারবোধের দাবিতে প্রকৃতি সোচ্চার হয়েছে,

আমি তোমারি মাটির কন্যা
জননী বসুন্ধরা।
তবে আমার মানবজন্ম
কেন বঞ্চিত করা।

‘পবিত্র’ বসুন্ধরার ‘মানবকন্যা’ প্রকৃতি। ভিক্ষুকুল স্বর্গপ্রত্যাশায় বসুন্ধরাকে তুচ্ছ করেন, সেই সঙ্গে প্রকৃতির রূপযৌবনকেও হেয় করেন। প্রকৃতি তার মোহিনীশক্তির সাহায্যে এই অবিচারের শোধ নিতে চায়। উদ্ভিষ্টের আবাহন-কৃত্যালীর পর প্রিয়ের আগমন আর স্বীকৃতির প্রত্যাশায় সে অপেক্ষামান থাকে—

এসো শুভাম্বিত শুকতারায়,
এসো শিশির-অক্ষরারায়,
সিন্দুর পরাও উষারে
তব রম্মিতে ॥

প্রকৃতি মনের মধ্যেই প্রিয়ের পদধ্বনি শুনে পেয়ে জন্মান্তরের পালার মিশ্র অনুভূতিতে আনন্দের উদ্দেশে বলেছে, “ও আমার সর্বনাশ, ও আমার সর্বস্ব, তুমি এসেছ—আমার সমস্ত অপমানের চূড়ায় তোমাকে বসাব, গাঁথব তোমার সিংহাসন। আমার লজ্জা দিয়ে, ভয় দিয়ে, আনন্দ দিয়ে।” প্রিয়র যাত্রাশেষের পরমুহূর্তের কল্পনায় ভয়ে, ব্যথায় সে স্রিয়মান হয়ে উঠে বলে, “তার পর? তার পরে কী। শুধু এই আমি! আর কিছু না! এতদিনের নিষ্ঠুর দুঃখ এতেই ভরবে? শুধু আমি? কিসের জন্য এত দীর্ঘ, এত দুর্গম পথ! শেষ কোথায় এর! শুধু এই আমাতে।” প্রেমের অতলান্ত গভীর অনুভব থাকলেই বৃষ্টি বৃকের কাছে আসা এই উদ্যত মিলনমুহূর্ত বিষাদময় হয়ে ওঠে, মঙ্গলালোকে দীপ্তি পায়।

‘পথের শেষ কোথায়’?—এ জিজ্ঞাসা দার্শনিকের। অন্যদিকে, কবির পাথেয় নিতাবিশ্বয়, পথ চলবার আনন্দ-বেদনাকে নিয়েই তাঁর মালা গাঁথা। তাই পথের শেষ নয়, আনন্দই তাঁর ঈঙ্গিত। ‘এত কামনা এত সাধনা’ নিকিড় ‘বাগা’ সমাধিত হয়ে। ‘নিকিড়দেশ যাত্রা’ করেছে—এই কবিরিদ্দাহেই প্রকৃতি স্থিত হয়। ‘*ছিন্নপত্র*’ ১। ১৮ ‘সংসার-পথে’ এত কামনা এত সাধনার ঈঙ্গিত মিলবে। কবির মতে, “পথের শেষ কোথায়? গাঁথার শেষেই,

গ্রামাদের নানা সুখদুঃখ পাপপুণ্যের মধ্যে দিয়ে অনন্তের দিকে বিকশিত করে তুলছে। নদীকে যে শক্তি মরুভূমির মধ্যে নিয়ে আসে সেই শক্তিই সমুদ্রের মধ্যে নিয়ে যায়। এমের মধ্যে যে ফেলে এম থেকে সেই টেনে নিয়ে যায়।” “প্রকৃতির যে প্রবৃত্তি সংকীর্ণ স্বার্থে শ্রাবক আনন্দকে কুক্ষীগত করতে চেয়েছে, তাই সুখদুঃখ পাপপুণ্যের মধ্য দিয়ে অনন্তের দিকে বিকশিত হয়ে মঙ্গলদীপ্ত হয়ে উঠেছে। আনন্দ যখন ‘দীপ্ত উজ্জ্বল’, ‘শুভ্র নির্মল’, ‘সুদূর স্বর্গের আলো’ নিয়ে না এসে স্নান, ক্লান্ত, আত্মপ্রাণির প্রকাণ্ড বোঝা নিয়ে নতমস্তকে, পরাজিত ট্রাজিক নায়করূপে এলেন, তখন প্রকৃতি আত্মসংবরণ করে। কারণ আনন্দের পরাজয় যে তারও পরাজয়। বেদনাহত প্রকৃতি পদাঘাতে মস্তকের উপকরণ ছড়িয়ে মাকে ‘বীরের অপমান’ থেকে বিরত করে। মা আর মেয়ে আনন্দের কাছে ক্ষমাপ্রার্থনা করে। শাস্তা বুদ্ধ করুণাঘন স্তানলোচন পাপ-ক্লেশনাশী। ক্ষমাসুন্দর দৃষ্টিতে আনন্দ বুদ্ধশরণ নিয়ে ‘রতনশয়-পগাম-গাথা’ আবৃত্তি করেন—

“বুদ্ধো সুসুদ্ধো করুণামহাশিবো
যোচ্চন্ত সুদ্ধবর-স্তানলোচনো।
লোকসুখ পাপপুণ্যকিলেসঘাতকো
বন্দামি বুদ্ধম্ আহমাদরেণ তম্।”

॥ ১১ ॥

আবু সয়ীদ আইয়ুব আদ্যোপান্ত প্রকৃতির দুঃখে ভরা চণ্ডালিকাকে ‘ট্রাজেডির ভারতীয় সংস্করণ’ রূপে ব্যাখ্যা করতে চেয়েছেন। “*দি সংস্কৃত বুদ্ধিষ্ট লিটারেচার অব নেপাল*” অনুযায়ী, আনন্দ সংকটকালে বুদ্ধকারণ নিয়েছিলেন। বুদ্ধ অলৌকিকবলে শিষ্যের দুঃগতির কথা জেনে বৌদ্ধমন্ত্র আবৃত্তি করলে আনন্দ বিষাদোত্তীর্ণ হয়ে মঠে ফিরে আসেন। সতীশচন্দ্র আর রবীন্দ্রনাথ কেউই এক্ষেত্রে মূলানুগ নন। রবীন্দ্রনাথ আনন্দের মুখেই মন্ত্র বসিয়ে আত্মশক্তিতে আত্মোদ্ধার ঘটিয়েছেন। এই প্রতিগ্রহণের উৎস সন্ধানে ‘দীর্ঘনিকায়’-এর শরণ নিচ্ছি। মহাপরিনির্বাণের প্রাক্‌মূহূর্তে বুদ্ধ আনন্দকে বলেছেন, “Ananda, you must be your own lamps, be yourselves.” “বুদ্ধের মহাপরিনির্বাণের পর আত্মসংবরণ ও আত্মবোধবোধনের পথেই চলতে হবে। রবীন্দ্রনাথ এই ভাবনার আলোকেই আনন্দকে চিত্রিত করেছিলেন।

চণ্ডালিনী প্রকৃতির ‘শীলিত আত্মসমাহতি’ রূপের যে অংশটুকু ‘শার্দূলকর্ষামৃত’-এ চিত্রণ, তা রবীন্দ্রনাথ বর্জন করেছেন। পরিত্যক্ত অংশটি উদ্ধার করা হ’ল—

"Matters, however, did not progress so satisfactorily as could be wished. The girl, disappointed at night rose early the next morning, put on her finest apparel and stood on the road by which Ananda daily went to the city for alms. Ananda came and she followed him to every house he went for alms. This caused a great scandal and Ananda followed by the girl ran back to the hermitage and reported the occurrence to the Lord. The Lord was then called upon to exercise diplomacy to save the character of his disciple. He said to Prakriti "You want to marry Ananda. Have you got the permission of your parents? Go and get their permission." This afforded but slight respite for Prakriti soon returned from the city with her parents' permission. The Lord then said, 'Should you wish to marry Ananda, you must put on the same kind of ochre-coloured vestment which he uses.' She agreed and thereupon her head was shaved and she was made to put on ochre-coloured cloth divested of her vicious motives and had all her former sins removed by the mantra called *sarvadurgati-sodhana-dharini*, the destroyer of all evils. Thus did the Lord convert her into a Bhikshuni." ১১

বুদ্ধ সর্বদুর্গতিশোধনধারিণী মস্ত্রে প্রকৃতিকে ভিক্ষুণী করে সংঘে প্রবেশাধিকার দেন। এই ঘটনাকে কেন্দ্র করে এক সামাজিক সংকট ও আলোড়ন দেখা দেয়। রাজা প্রসেনজিৎ এবং শ্রাবস্তীর ব্রাহ্মণ-ক্ষত্রিয়রা এই অনাচারের বিরুদ্ধে হীন অভিযোগ বুদ্ধের কাছে অভিযোগ দাখিল করলে তিনি প্রকৃত বিষয় জানাতে প্রকৃতির পূর্বজন্মের ইতিহাস বিবৃত করেন : গঙ্গাতীরের জঙ্গলে দশ হাজার স্ব-জাতীয় চণ্ডালসহ ত্রিশঙ্কু বাস করতেন। তিনি পূর্বজন্মে বেদ, ইতিহাস, জ্ঞানকাণ্ডের অন্যান্য শাস্ত্র অধ্যয়ন করেছিলেন এবং বর্তমান জীবনে তা স্মরণ করতে পারতেন। তাঁর পুত্র ও শিষ্য শার্দূলকর্ণ পিতার মত জাতিস্মরণ ও পণ্ডিত ছিলেন। ত্রিশঙ্কু যোগপুত্রের জন্য পুষ্করাসারি নামক এক ব্রাহ্মণের কন্যা সারদবতীকে মনোনীত করেন। কিন্তু বাধা হয়ে দাঁড়ায় জাতিভেদ। এ বিষয়ে ব্রাহ্মণের সঙ্গে ত্রিশঙ্কুর দীর্ঘশাস্ত্রালোচনা হয়। ত্রিশঙ্কু বলেন, মানুষের শারীরিক কাঠামো, জন্ম এবং মৃত্যু এক ও অভিন্ন। সেখানে যদি সাযুজ্য থাকে তাহলে জাতিভেদ প্রথার অসরাস্বত্বই প্রমাণিত হয়। ত্রিশঙ্কুর অকাটা যুক্তি— "There is a marked distinction between ashes and gold, but there is nothing of the kind between a Brahman and a person of another caste. A Brahman is not produced like fire by the friction of dry wood: he descends not from the sky, nor from

the wind, nor does he arise, piercing the earth. The Brahman is brought forth from the womb exactly in the same way as a Chandala. When he dies he causes impurity exactly as other castes do; there is not the least difference in the case. Brahmins longing for flesh-meat, commit most cruel sacrifices. They say that goats and the like, by being sanctified by mantras go to heaven after slaughter. If this be the way to heaven why don't they send their fathers, mothers, sisters and the rest to heaven by the same expeditious way? Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaisya and Sudra are mere names, and imply no specific distinctions. All human beings have feet, thighs, nails, flesh, sides, and back exactly alike; there is not the slightest difference in any respect and therefore there cannot be four different species.”^{১১} এরপর গায়ত্রী মন্ত্র, নক্ষত্রের অবস্থান, গ্রহ এবং জ্যোতির্বিদ্যা এবং মঙ্গল বা অমঙ্গলসূচক চিহ্ন প্রভৃতি দুজ্জয় বিষয়ে ব্রাহ্মণ প্রশ্ন করলে ত্রিশঙ্কু সন্তোষজনক উত্তর দেন: সমস্ত বিধাবদ্ধ কেটে গেলে ব্রাহ্মণ শার্দূলকর্ণের সঙ্গে তাঁর কন্যা সারদবতীর পরিণয়ে সম্মতিজ্ঞাপন করেন। কে এই ত্রিশঙ্কু, শার্দূলকর্ণ আর সারদবতী? পূর্বজন্মে বুদ্ধ ছিলেন ত্রিশঙ্কু, আনন্দ শার্দূলকর্ণ আর প্রকৃতি সারদবতী।^{১২}

॥ ১৬ ॥

‘শার্দূলকর্ণামৃত’র সাহিত্যিক প্রতিগ্রহণ ‘চণ্ডালিকা’র সৃজন প্রক্রিয়ার পিছনে রবীন্দ্রিক জীবনদর্শন ও ভঙ্গি ক্রিয়াশীল। বহুধাবিচিত্র মনের অধিকারী রবীন্দ্রনাথের সাহিত্যসাধনার মধ্যমণি ‘প্রেম’। ২৫ বৈশাখ ১৩৩৮-এর ‘অভিভাষণ’-এ আত্মপরিচয়দানকালে রবীন্দ্রনাথ তাঁর ‘একটিমাত্র পরিচয়’ দিয়ে বলেছেন, “আমি ... বিচিত্রের দূত। ... বিচিত্রের লীলাকে অন্তরে গ্রহণ করে তাকে বাহিরে লীলায়িত করা— এই আমার কাজ। মানবকে গম্যস্থানে চালাবার দাবি রাখি নে, পথিকদের চলার সঙ্গে চলার কাজ আমার।”^{১৩} তিনি পৃথিবীর প্রেমের মধ্যে দিয়ে ভূমানন্দের পরিচয়, জাগতিক রূপের মধ্যেই অপরূপকে সাক্ষাৎ প্রত্যক্ষ করাকেই মুক্তির সাধনা বলেছেন।^{১৪} সাধকের সাধনমার্গের বিপ্রতীপে কবির বন্ধনময় মুক্তির সাধনা। ইন্দ্রিয়রুদ্ধ যোগাসন নয়। ইন্দ্রিয় সংবেদনের আনন্দকে সঙ্গী করে ‘মোহ’কে ‘মুক্তি’ আর ‘প্রেম’কে ‘ভক্তি’রূপে উদ্বোধনের কথা কবি বলেন। নৈবেদ্য-৩০ সংখ্যক কবিতায় এটি ভাবেরই প্রকাশ পাচ্ছে,

‘বৈরাগ্যসাধনে মুক্তি, সে আমার নয়।

অসংখ্য বন্ধন-মাঝে মহানন্দময়

লভিব মুক্তির স্বাদ।’^{১১}

সৌন্দর্যের পূজারী, প্রকৃতি ও মানুষের আনন্দগানের চারণকবির স্বভাবধর্ম সন্ন্যাস কখনোই কাঙ্ক্ষিত নয়। প্রতিগ্রহণকালে মূল কাহিনির পুঙ্খানুপুঙ্খ অনুসরণ করলে কেন্দ্রবিন্দুর বদল ঘটে মহাকারণিক তথ্যগত হয়ে উঠতেন মূল চালিকাশক্তি, তাতে কবির অভিপ্রায় সিক্ত হ’ত না। তাতে জ্ঞাতপাতের সমস্যাকে ঠিকভাবে চিহ্নিত করা যেত ঠিকই, কিন্তু আনন্দ-প্রকৃতির দ্বন্দ্বময় প্রেম বিচিত্ররূপে প্রকাশ পেত না। বুদ্ধকর্তৃক প্রকৃতিকে প্রব্রজিতকরণ রবীন্দ্রনাথ-কর্তৃক পরিত্যক্ত হয়। কবি সন্ন্যাসের বিপ্রতীপে প্রেমের অস্ত্রকে শাণিত করে তাতে সঞ্চারিত করলেন বেদন আর সাধন যা শেষপর্যন্ত ব্যক্তিপ্রেমকে অতিক্রম করে বিশ্বমৈত্রীর ইঙ্গিতবাহী।

১৩ ফেব্রুয়ারি ১৯২৫ ‘পশ্চিমযাত্রীর ডায়ারি’তে রবীন্দ্রনাথ প্রেমের দ্ব্যর্থক রূপের উল্লেখ করেছেন, ‘ভালোলাগা আর ভালোবাসা’। ভালোলাগা আত্মকেন্দ্রিক, আবেগের মুখ নিজদিকে; অন্যদিকে ভালোবাসা অপরকেন্দ্রিক, আবেগের মুখ অন্যের দিকে। ভালোলাগায় ‘ভোগের তৃপ্তি’, ভালোবাসায় ‘ত্যাগের সাধন’।^{১২} প্রকৃতির মধ্যে ‘ভালোলাগা’ থেকে ‘ভালোবাসা’য় উত্তরণ লক্ষ করা যায়। আনন্দ প্রকৃতিকে জ্ঞাতের হীনমন্যতা থেকে উদ্ধার করেন, অন্যদিকে প্রকৃতি ও শ্রাবক আনন্দকে নিজ প্রেমের আত্মসর্বস্বতা থেকে মুক্তি দিয়ে প্রেমের একনিষ্ঠতার পরিচয় রাখে।

বৌদ্ধগ্রন্থ ‘সুত্তপটক’-এর ‘বুদ্ধকনিকায়’-এর ‘করণীমেওসুত্ত’র একটি পদ রবীন্দ্রনাথ একাধিকবার ব্যবহৃত হয়েছে,

“মাতা যথা নিয়ং পুস্তং আয়ুসা একপুত্তমনুরূপে,

এবম্পি সর্বভূতেষু মানসন্তাবয়ে অপরিমাণাং।”

রবীন্দ্রকৃত অনুবাদ, “মা যেমন আপন আয়ু ক্ষয় করেই নিজের একমাত্র পুত্রকে রক্ষা করে তেমনি সকল প্রাণীর প্রতি মনে অপরিমাণ দয়াভাব জন্মাবে।”^{১৩} ৭ বৈশাখ ১৩১৬য় লেখা ‘মুক্তির পথ’ প্রবন্ধে রবীন্দ্রনাথ বুদ্ধের দর্শনকে অভিনবভাবে ব্যাখ্যা করেছেন, “...তিনি (বুদ্ধ) মঙ্গলসাধনার দ্বারা প্রেমকে বিশ্বচরাচরে মুক্ত করতে উপদেশ দিয়েছিলেন। তাঁর মুক্তির সাধনাই ছিল স্বার্থত্যাগ অহংকারত্যাগ ক্রোধভ্যাগের সাধনা, ক্ষমার সাধনা, দয়ার সাধনা, প্রেমের সাধনা। এমনি করে প্রেম ...অহং’এর শাসন

অতিক্রম করে বিশ্বের মধ্যে অনন্তের মধ্যে মৃত্যু হয় ... সেই-ই মুক্তি। এই প্রেম যা যেখানে আছে কিছুকেই ত্যাগ করে না; সমস্তকেই সত্যময় করে। পূর্ণতম করে উপলব্ধি করে। নিজেকে পূর্ণের মধ্যে সমর্পণ করবার কোনো বাধাই মানে না।” “প্রাথমিক পর্বে প্রকৃতির মনে আনন্দের প্রতি যে প্রেম জেগেছিল তা আত্মসর্বস্ব; যখন পরাজয়ের গ্লানি নিয়ে তিনি তার সামনে দাঁড়ালেন, তখন নিদারুণ আঘাতে প্রিয়ের মঙ্গলের জন্য সে সর্বস্ব ত্যাগে প্রস্তুত হল। জেগে উঠল আনন্দময় ‘অম্লানমঙ্গলশ্রী’ প্রেম, যা ব্যক্তিগত হয়েও বিশ্বগত। তা ‘সমস্ত সংসারের আনন্দের সামগ্রী’।”

প্রাচীন কাহিনি তার বৃক্কের মধ্যে পরম যত্নে জমা করে রাখে নিত্যকালের সঞ্চয়। সংবেদনময় ভালোবাসার ক্রমসংস্কারণের ইতিহাসের শরিক হয়ে আসে কখনো অধিকা, কখনো অনান্নী কেউ, কখনো বা প্রকৃতি। সর্বভাগী সন্ন্যাসীকেও সে টেনে নিতে চায়। ব্যর্থতা বা সফলতা আত্যন্তিক আত্মনিবেদনের কাছে তুচ্ছ হয়ে যায়, শুধু জেগে থাকে প্রেম, অগ্নিনিষ্কাশিত সোনার মত, যা ভূমিস্পর্শমুদ্রায় নিত্য সমুজ্জ্বল।

প্রবন্ধে ব্যবহৃত কবিতা ও নাটকের সংস্করণ নির্দেশ :

- ১। রায়, সতীশচন্দ্র, ১৪১১, *চণ্ডালী, রবীন্দ্র-অনুব্রতী সতীশচন্দ্র*, সম্পাদনা-পুলিনবিহারী সেন ও অনাথনাথ দাস, পশ্চিম বাংলা আকাদেমি, ৫১-৫৭।
- ২। ঠাকুর, রবীন্দ্রনাথ, ১৪১০, *কুয়ার খারে, খেয়া, রবীন্দ্র-রচনাবলী*, পঞ্চম খণ্ড, (মূলভ সংস্করণ), বিশ্বভারতী, ১৬৮-৬৯।
- ৩। ঠাকুর, রবীন্দ্রনাথ, ১৪১০, *জলপাত্র, পরিশেষ, রবীন্দ্র-রচনাবলী*, অষ্টম খণ্ড, (মূলভ সংস্করণ), বিশ্বভারতী, ১৯৪-৯৫।
- ৪। ঠাকুর, রবীন্দ্রনাথ, ১৪১০, ‘*চণ্ডালিকা*’ (নাটক), *রবীন্দ্র-রচনাবলী*, দ্বাদশ খণ্ড, (মূলভ সংস্করণ), বিশ্বভারতী, ২১৫-২৭।

উৎস ও অনুঘস :

- ১। Hawthorn Jeremy. 2000. *A Glossary of Contemporary Literary Theory*, Arnold, 295.
- ২। Ibid., 295.

- ৩। Ibid., 295.
- ৪। Mitra. Rajendralala. 1991. *Sardulakarana Avadana. The Sanskrit Buddhist Literature of Nepal*. Sanskrit Pustak Bhandar: p. 218.
- ৫। Ibid., 219.
- ৬। রায়, সতীশচন্দ্র, ১৪১১, *সতীশচন্দ্র রায়ের রচনা : চিঠিপত্র, রবীন্দ্র-অনুব্রতী সতীশচন্দ্র রায়, পশ্চিমবঙ্গ বাংলা আকাদেমি*, ১২৬।
- ৭। তদেব, ১২৮।
- ৮। *সতীশচন্দ্র রায়ের রচনা : ডায়ারি*, তদেব, ১০০।
- ৯। ঘোষ শঙ্খ, *তিন চণ্ডালী, ঐতিহ্যের বিস্তার, শঙ্খ ঘোষের গদ্যসংগ্রহ*, চতুর্থ খণ্ড, দে'জ, ২১০।
- ১০। *সতীশচন্দ্র রায়ের রচনা : ডায়ারি*, তদেব, ৯৭।
- ১১। মজুমদার, নেপাল, ১৩৯৭, 'তাসের দেশ', *ভারতে জাতীয়তা ও আন্তর্জাতিকতা এবং রবীন্দ্রনাথ*, তৃতীয় খণ্ড, দে'জ, ৩২২।
- ১২। মুখোপাধ্যায়, প্রভাতকুমার মুখোপাধ্যায়, ১৪০৬, *রবীন্দ্রজীবনী ও রবীন্দ্রসাহিত্য-প্রবেশক*, তৃতীয় খণ্ড, বিশ্বভারতী, ৪৯০।
- ১৩। তদেব, ৪৯০।
- ১৪। তদেব, ৪৯২।
- ১৫। তদেব, ৪৯০।
- ১৬। *আনন্দ, বৌদ্ধকোষ*, দ্বিতীয় খণ্ড, ১৯৯৭-৯৮, পালি বিভাগ, কলকাতা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, ১৭১-৭৮।
- ১৭। আইয়ুব আবু সয়ীদ, ১৪১৩ *প্রেমের দুই রূপ, পাহাড়জনের সখা*, দে'জ, ১০১।
- ১৮। *তিন চণ্ডালী*, তদেব, ২১৬।
- ১৯। ঘোষ তপোব্রত, *গোরা আর বিনয়*, অবভাস, মাঘ ১৪১৫, ১৫।
- ২০। ঠাকুর, রবীন্দ্রনাথ, *নিষ্ফল কামনা, মানসী, রবীন্দ্র-রচনাবলী*, প্রথম খণ্ড, (সুলভ সংস্করণ), বিশ্বভারতী, ২৪২।
- ২১। বসু চারুচন্দ্র (অনুদিত), ১৯৯৯, *ব্রাহ্মণবর্ণগো, ধর্মপদ, করুণা প্রকাশনী*, ১৬৯-৭০।
- ২২। ঠাকুর, রবীন্দ্রনাথ, *পথপ্রান্তে, বিচিত্র প্রবন্ধ, রবীন্দ্র-রচনাবলী*, তৃতীয় খণ্ড, (সুলভ সংস্করণ), বিশ্বভারতী, ১৩৯৪, ৬৯৮-৯৯।
- ২৩। ঠাকুর, রবীন্দ্রনাথ, ১৩৯৪ *প্রেম : প্রেম-বৈচিত্র্য, রবীন্দ্র-রচনাবলী*, চতুর্থ খণ্ড, পশ্চিমবঙ্গ সরকার, ৩৩৪।

- ২৪। ঠাকুর, রবীন্দ্রনাথ, ১৩৯৪ *পশ্চিমযাত্রীর ডায়ারি*, রবীন্দ্র-রচনাবলী, দশম খণ্ড, (সুলভ সংস্করণ), বিশ্বভারতী, ৪৫৩-৫৫।
- ২৫। তদেব, ৪৭৭।
- ২৬। ঠাকুর, রবীন্দ্রনাথ, ১৪১০, *বিশ্ববতী, সোনার তরী, রবীন্দ্র-রচনাবলী*, দ্বিতীয় খণ্ড, (সুলভ সংস্করণ), বিশ্বভারতী, ১০।
- ২৭। Shah, Sayed Idries, 1956. *The Occult Art In China, Oriental Magic*, Rider and Company, 151. আমরা প্রাসঙ্গিক অংশটুকু উদ্ধার করছি, "Magic mirrors are among the most important instruments of the Art of China. Ko Hung, one of the highest authorities on this, regarded them as essential in the constant battle against demons : and it must be remembered that these spectres are at the bottom of almost everything. Protection against evil, death and disease, can only be secured through combating the demons which control these phenomena. Success, riches and victory — the so-called Positive Advantages — can likewise be attained through the co-operation of the spectres within whose domain these subjects fall."
- ২৮। Coomarswamy Ananda. 2003. *The Dance of Shiva*, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 87.
- ২৯। ঠাকুর, রবীন্দ্রনাথ, ১৪১০, *পাগল, বিচিত্র প্রবন্ধ, রবীন্দ্র-রচনাবলী*, তৃতীয় খণ্ড, (সুলভ সংস্করণ), বিশ্বভারতী, ৬৭৮।
- ৩০। ঠাকুর, রবীন্দ্রনাথ, ১৪১০, *নগরলক্ষী, কথা, রবীন্দ্র-রচনাবলী*, চতুর্থ খণ্ড, (সুলভ সংস্করণ), বিশ্বভারতী, ৪৬।
- ৩১। ঠাকুর, রবীন্দ্রনাথ, ১৪১১, *পত্রসংখ্যা ৮, ছিন্নপত্রাবলী*, বিশ্বভারতী, ২৬-২৭।
- ৩২। *প্রেমের দুই রূপ*, তদেব, ১১৪।
- ৩৩। Basham, A. L., 1992. 'Chapter 5, Theravada Buddhism', *Part II : Jainism and Buddhism, Sources of Indian Tradition*, Penguin, 112.
- ৩৪। *Sardulakarana Avadana*, Ibid., 219.
- ৩৫। Ibid., 220.
- ৩৬। Ibid., 221-22.
- ৩৭। ঠাকুর, রবীন্দ্রনাথ, ১৪১০, *আত্মপর্যায়, রবীন্দ্র-রচনাবলী*, চতুর্দশ খণ্ড, (সুলভ সংস্করণ), বিশ্বভারতী, ১৭০।

- ৩৮। তদেব, ১৪৭।
- ৩৯। ঠাকুর, রবীন্দ্রনাথ, ১৪১০, নৈবেদ্য ৩০, রবীন্দ্র-রচনাবলী, চতুর্থ খণ্ড, (সুলভ সংস্করণ), বিশ্বভারতী, ২৮১।
- ৪০। ঠাকুর, রবীন্দ্রনাথ, ১৪১০, পশ্চিমযাত্রীর ডায়ারি, রবীন্দ্র-রচনাবলী, দশম খণ্ড, (সুলভ সংস্করণ), বিশ্বভারতী, ৪৭৬।
- ৪১। ঠাকুর, রবীন্দ্রনাথ, ১৪১০, মানুষের ধর্ম, 'ভিন', রবীন্দ্র-রচনাবলী, দশম খণ্ড, (সুলভ সংস্করণ), বিশ্বভারতী, ৪৭৬।
- ৪২। ঠাকুর, রবীন্দ্রনাথ, ১৪১০, মুক্তির পথ, শান্তিনিকেতন-১, রবীন্দ্র-রচনাবলী, সপ্তম খণ্ড, (সুলভ সংস্করণ), বিশ্বভারতী, ৬৮৪।
- ৪৩। ঠাকুর, রবীন্দ্রনাথ, ১৪১০, কুমারসম্ভব ও শকুন্তলা, প্রাচীন সাহিত্য, রবীন্দ্র-রচনাবলী, তৃতীয় খণ্ড, (সুলভ সংস্করণ), বিশ্বভারতী, ৭২০।

REVIEW of K. Alfons Knauth (ed.)
Translation & Multilingual Literature / Traduction
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"This volume is an outcome of the Workshop on *Translation and Multilingual Literature* organized by the ICLA Research Committee *Mapping Multilingualism in World Literature*, chaired by Alfons Knauth, at the XIXth Congress of the International Comparative Literature Association (ICLA/AILC) held at the Chung-Ang University Seoul (Korea), August 15-21, 2010," writes K. Alfons Knauth. This 'Annotation' (p. 24) ends his introductory essay 'Translation and multilingual literature as a new field of research in between Translation Studies and Comparative Literature' which provides a personal take on the contents of the book under review. His take goes far beyond the usual cut and paste jobs that adorn many proceedings volumes and festschrifts. Knauth has thought about the issues and thought about what his conference participants had to say. However, he does not force the reflections of others into a procrustean bed packaged as a framework. He is asking questions, not consolidating answers.

Does the volume itself count as multilingual because its sixteen articles represent four languages (English 7, French 5, German 2, Spanish 2)? To go in for that kind of counting is already to step into a default territorialism that the multilingual literature enterprise has been trying, with some success, to unsettle.

To see what kind of unsettling is at the most elementary level, consider a point made, in her article 'Figures translationnelles

Jadavpur Journal of Comparative Literature, Volume XLIX, 2011-2012

dans la chanson française plurilingue', by Annika Runte-Collin: "la chanson, de par son oralité, se prête à merveille à un autre niveau de traduction, la traduction sonore" (p. 256); "ce n'est pas le sens du mot qui est rendu dans l'autre langue, mais sa forme sonore qui est reproduite ou imitée" (p. 257). I italicize the relevant bits in the first few lines of her example, the song 'For me, formidable' sung by Charles Aznavour (1962): "You are the one, for me, *for me, formidable!* You are my love, very, very, *véritable!* Et Je voudrais pouvoir un jour te le dire./ Te l'écrire, dans la langue de Shakespeare/ My daisy, daisy *daisy, désirable*" (p. 257).

A volume that goes into detailed case studies over such an expanse — ranging from science-focused poems (Mario Markus and Alfons Knauth, 'Translations between science and poetry: chemical poems', pp. 333-46) to the visually compelling rearrangements of words and characters known as 'concrete poetry' (Marianne Simon-Oikawa, 'From translation to supranational poetry: the polyglot poems of Pierre Garner and Niikuni Seiichi', pp. 117-38) — is bound to have something for every reader. At that level, this volume successfully showcases a wide range of work in and around the intersection of multilingualism with literature and translation. Such showcasing itself is an accomplishment of some importance; the volume will remain valuable as a reference for years to come.

Furthermore, the fact that Alfons Knauth has been able to persuade colleagues in this field to connect their polymorphous inquiries into a shared project of unsettling the business-as-usual menu of comparative literature and of translation studies is apparent in this volume. Some authors have responded by placing particular issues in the context of fundamental questions in the field. A reader wishing to arrive at a fresh response on such matters as cultural relativism, for example, or the literary encounter with the Other, will find several studies in this volume that bring the problematic of multilingual literature to bear on those fundamental questions.

One recurrent question that attracts considerable attention has to do with translating a multilingual text. Hans-Georg Gruening's article 'Multilinguale Literatur und ihre Uebersetzung in der italienischen Nachkriegsliteratur: Curzio Malaparte und Beppe Fenoglio' (pp. 95-115) carefully shows how Malaparte's routine multilingual peppering of his fiction with non-Italian material that serves to contextualize his characters or their actions is vastly different from Fenoglio's intensely personal life-long relationship with English that has prompted him to mix the Italian of his novel *Il partigiano Johnny* with an English so idiosyncratic that critics have made a point of calling it *fenglese*. One of Gruening's points is that these differences — especially when one is translating Fenoglio into English — call for sensitive handling. Language mixture is part of what makes such fiction tick; a translator who erases the multilingual character of the text misses the literary point. Gruening notes that the translator is often paid by the publisher to miss the point, bowing to the fact that a particular readership is decidedly monolingual and would merely feel intimidated if it was forced to read a multilingual translation. Gruening also highlights the fact that a language that has acquired 'enemy language' status during wartime - such as German or Italian, from the French or English standpoint - retains this connotation for years, a fact that restricts the choices available to a translator who is willing and in principle able to convey an equivalent flavour to her readers.

Wartime enemy language status is of course only one kind of otherness. In her article 'Translating interculturality in the multilingual text' (pp. 305-18), Subha Chakraborty Dasgupta focuses on Mahasweta Devi's short story 'Shishu' (*Mahasweta Devir Panchasti Galpo*, pp. 377-88) and its English translation in volume 2 of Susie Tharu and K. Lalita's *Women Writing in India*. She focuses specifically on the "petrification of speech, of language, faced with the reality of the tribal's world" in response to which the middle-class protagonist in the narrative -- experiencing with comprehension the way the "the multilingual mode of speech on

the part of the 'children' tends to retain a certain phatic function in communication" but unable to take part in it himself — "finds himself moving further and further away from the communicative circuit, from any communicative circuit as such, and it is here again, in the intensity of the reaction, that we have faith in a corresponding move towards the beginning of intercultural understanding" (p. 310).

How does the translation handle this protagonist's critical inability to speak to the Other? "At the end of the text, experiences in terms of language of both the source language and the target language texts are similar for in both the plurality of languages includes speechlessness as one of its components. The end of the English text is as follows: 'The only recourse left to Singh was to go stark, raving mad, tearing the expanse apart with a howl like that of a mad dog. But why wasn't his brain ordering his vocal chords to scream and scream and scream? Only tears ran down his cheeks (Tharu & Lalita 1993:251)'. [...] The metaphor of speechlessness in the multilingual text is invoked to mark the limit of the humanist imagination in the context of alterity where silence or untranslatability becomes the truth of translation as well as of multilingualism" (p. 305).

Subha Chakraborty Dasgupta's take on the handling of multilingualism in the translation works much more closely with specific elements of the text: "Devi has four English phrases in the first eight lines of the story and the translator has kept just one English phrase. [...] In the eighth line [which runs *Aadibaasider kono honest way of living nei*] [...] the source states that the people there had no "honest way of living" which is translated as: "The residents did not have any way of making an honest living". The voice in the last section is that of a government officer 'briefing' the relief officer and the irony is lost in the translation. [...] The objectivity, in some cases, of the narrator's point of view is a deceptive objectivity, some of the English words in the source text seem to suggest. It is a point of view that is complicit with mainstream prejudices of representing certain tribes in debilitating

terms. The English rendition neutralizes the viewpoint, taking away the undercurrent of a political statement present in the source and replaces it with a tone of empathy" (p. 313).

Her account of the erasure of multilingualism in this particular translation - though it is only one element in her paper - runs parallel to Gruening's comments on certain monolingualized translations of Malaparte's fiction. Space obviously prevents us from citing the details in every case, but several contributors to this volume show that multilingualism is often lost in translation; that the monolingualist default is one factor responsible for this systematic loss; and that one valid response to the problem is to develop the study of multilingual literature as a specific subfield that draws on the resources of translation studies and comparative literature but is not just a set of corollaries from received wisdom in those fields as they now stand.

Apart from the loss in translation of the multilingual element in key original texts, another recurrent theme that the authors in this volume develop in various empirical contexts is 'intraduction', a concept highlighted by Lisa Block de Behar, in her major essay 'Algunas meditaciones sobre la *intraducción* y las ambivalencias de una figura plurilingüe de escasa figuración' (pp. 27-40). Block de Behar takes the Uruguayan philosopher Carlos Vaz Ferreira's (1872-1958) 1920 essay 'Sobre la sinceridad literaria' as a point of departure. She finds in his essay an anticipation of the hypertext capabilities of our internetworked times. She uses the boundary-play of in+traduction/intra+duction to pack her take on the encoding of complex cogitation into the nonlinear capabilities of writing. This encoding - in Block's view, which builds on Vaz Ferreira's - endows every written text with signature-level idiomatic uniqueness. It is at this point that texts lose even the option of monolingual code-bound unifiability; hence her radical in/tra/ducibility claims. Distinctly in/tra/ducible texts, she argues, exercise the always potentially available sovereign prerogative of moving back to a level that is both multilingual and prelingual, a level that precedes the weaving of textuality itself.

The principal move made by Block de Behar, as she initiates us into Vaz Ferreira's thinking and elaborates it, runs as follows. Poetry — the locus of the transmutation of thought into writing — forces a negotiation of the syntagmatic axis with the paradigmatic, under the aegis of the linguistic sign's cumulative semiotic associations supplementing its arbitrarily conventionalized meaning-bearing labour. Block de Behar notes that Vaz Ferreira built the foundations for this move, and for the paradigmatic axis, well before 'paradigmatic' came into its own as a term of art in linguistics and poetics.

An important variant of the 'in/tra/duction' idea appears in a manifesto poem by Peter Wessel, *Un idioma sin fronteras*, 'A borderless language'; this multilingual text is cited by another major multilingual poet Antoine Cassar (pp. 239-40) in the appendix to his paper '*Le son juste*: translatory problematics in the contemporary scene of polyglot poetry'. Let us put the point in Cassar's English and Wessel's French: "As Wessel concludes later in the poem," Cassar writes, "poetry can be considered a language in itself irrespective of the tongue employed as a medium (*tout compte fait/ ils n'ont qu'une langue!*)" (p. 222). This thought suggests one way in which the thematization of literary multilinguality and Vaz Ferreira and Block de Behar's paradigmatically inflected take on in/tra/duction contribute to the broader enterprise of unsettling territorialism. And this way of making the connection seems to match the qualitative, deliberately inexact style of contemporary work in translation studies and comparative literature.

In an earlier generation brought up on a Jakobsonian diet, some author or other would inevitably made a declaration along the lines of "The proposal that one should associate the geometry of essentially non-monolingual cogitation with poetry and with the paradigmatic makes sense; for relations between languages are being projected on to the plane of a textual cohabitation, and this is a special case of the projection of paradigmatic relations on to the syntagmatic axis." Such a structuralist consolidation, whose

appearance of exactitude once attracted so many, would have had the effect of fortifying territorialism. Thinking of the type exemplified by Jakobson was based on a naive acceptance of monolingual systems that first establish themselves as legitimate owners of territories (sets of speakers primordially loyal to this or that mother tongue) and only after securing this home base go in for inter-structural dealings with equally territory-attached systems next door.

In Jakobson's structuralism, the poetic function was allied to the metalingual function. But recall that Subha Chakraborty Dasgupta writes "the multilingual mode of speech on the part of the 'children' tends to retain a certain *phatic* function in communication" (p. 310, emphasis ours). Does it make sense to push this remark to the point of claiming that in the multilingual literature enterprise the poetic function aligns itself, or also ties up, with the phatic function? I once argued (Dasgupta 1975) that the poetic function as understood in Praguean terms was excessively attached to monoliterary territorial instincts, and that the point was to learn how to detach it from a metalingual function so understood and to move in a phatic direction, stressing contact rather than separatism. Does the practice of multilingual literature — now fortified by tentative, initial theorizing — warrant the pursuit of such thoughts?

One important feature of the practices illustrated in Knauth's volume is the shared peaceful, tentative style of the proposals being put forward and their anti-militaristic, anti-chauvinistic content. Now, militarism envisages the destruction of paradigmatic relations and the glottophagic assimilation of one speech community into another — a theme represented in this volume by Tumba Shango Lokoho's engagement with colonialism 'Du multilinguisme et de la traduction des littératures africaines. Questions de méthode' (pp. 69-94). Suppose we contrast the violence inherent in any monolingual syntagmatic formation with the practice of peace implicit in the deliberate cultivation of paradigmatic neighbourliness. It then becomes possible to not just juxtapose Lokoho's exercise

with what I would like to deliberately call the septentrional emphasis of the European papers, but to actually move towards a theoretical integration of the African work with results from other colleagues that does not accept the rigorous mobilization imposed by a formal conceptualization of universals rooted in a putative linguistics.

Such an enterprise is hardly risk-free. When Lokoho suspects a collusion between all universalisms and the imperial project, it is hard to disagree. At one level, comparatists need to stick to their relativist guns until that danger is really gone. At the same time, I would like to argue, relativism is not enough. When it resists the old monolingualism too fiercely, it pits a coalition of meridional nationalisms against the septentrional prototype, and very soon we witness a return of the repressed. If in order to prevent that relapse you keep heroically insisting that nationalist-chauvinist assumptions of monolingual territorialism invariably underlie all views of transparency and that everybody must therefore constantly wear opacity on blood-stained sleeves, you thereby start a semiotic war of all against all. The most likely outcome is that your victims, anxious to get away from the avant-garde churning that you find invigorating, will rush into the embrace of the first amiable-looking nationalism they can find.

How, then, can you imagine a non-imperial universalism? I would recommend engaging carefully with the tentative, hesitant moves people have been making in their proto-accounts — if you want to look at my work in that vulnerable state, try Dasgupta (2010). The point is not to ask how to consolidate and expand these inchoate ideas into massive fortress-like doctrines to which hundreds of colleagues can pledge allegiance. The success of overcoming initial vulnerability is a false success, purchased by enjoining practitioners of the discipline not to listen to any colleagues next door or subaltern voices on the ground. There is a way to make vulnerability itself available for careful philosophical-literary scrutiny (McGhee 2000) — and to find a basis for dialogue precisely in one's inability to defend a fortress,

precisely in an intrinsic vulnerability that is a hesitation to intrude on what the Other may, now or later, need to inscribe as her or his space. That dialogue itself opens up a space that tends towards universalism. One way to guard against the danger of that universalism again settling into an imperial geometry is to valorize the paradigmatic space fashioned by the itinerant individual as a distinctive, multilingual idiom-maker.

This is not just a theoretical move. This is also a theoretical move that recuperates the variously border-crossing or hybrid itinerants documented in the volume under review. Consider Yvan Goll (Manfred Schmeling, 'L'autotraduction dans l'oeuvre trilingue d'Yvan Goll', pp. 141-51), Tomi Ungerer Britla Benert, '*Ce poème je ne vais pas vous le traduire: plurilinguisme et (in-) traduction chez Tomi Ungerer*', pp. 153-67), Julio Cortázar (Graciela N. Ricci, 'La transgresión de fronteras: traducción y práctica de la escritura en la obra de Julio Cortázar', pp. 169-92). when we ask what it takes to attempt a cartography of their 'trips', we begin to see how the tentativeness of the other can begin to inhabit my own through time, through space, and through other ways of understanding these geometries.

If you take this option seriously at the disciplinary level, there have to be corresponding changes in your voice as a literary performer on which your critical voice depends. Your textual speaking position then has to be a speaking itinerary the way a casual passenger striking up a conversation with an airport neighbour finds herself presenting a short curriculum vitae since conventional identities have stopped being informative — and the resulting sense of yourself as an itinerant is idiosyncratic in a way that Saussure's monocodal arbitrariness cannot encode. An 'idionerary', if that is what you want to call it when you are done, is not a code. Tu fumes, mais ceci n'est pas une pipe. Statutory warning: all smoking is violent.

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Probal Dasgupta

REVIEW of Jasbir Jain (ed.)
The Writer as Critic: Essays in Literature, History and Culture
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The Writer as Critic is homage to the renowned scholar Meenakshi Mukherjee who worked assiduously to bring critical focus on a large expanse of Indian writing. In this volume Jasbir Jain has undertaken a formidable and laudable task in bringing together within the folds of a volume a selection of extremely significant essays by Indian literatures written in the last century and a half. The volume begins with an essay by the progenitor of the Young Bengal movement Henry Louis Vivian Derozio 'On the Colonisation of India by Europeans' (1829) and concludes with Mridula Garg's 'Word As Censor' which was first published in *Economic and Political Weekly* (2000). The essayists, located variously in India, have been chronologically placed within the volume. Some of the essayists were bilingual or trilingual and their several writings are in different languages; some of the essays are in English while others have been translated into English. The issues covered by the twenty-four essays are also diverse though there are themes or concepts that recur in different essays. As the subtitle of the book elucidates the essays traverse the areas of literature, history and culture, mapping the experience of a people negotiating colonial modernity and indigenous cultural moorings as they strive to construct their literary and critical voice. The essays attempt to lay down the first principles as concepts such as language, time, space, memory, history, reality and realism are carefully explored and analysed.

The first two essays by Derozio and Jatirao Govindrao Phule ('Preface to *Ghulamgiri*') are quite evidently responses to the twin structures of oppression, race and caste, that ruled over the lives

of Indians generally and the minorities in particular. Derozio examines the impact of the colonial government on Indians and particularly Anglo-Indians while Phule examines how the injustices Dalits are exposed to within the Brahminical structure are validated and perpetuated. A later essay by Ra Ga Jadhav also focuses on the Dalit experience but with the purpose of developing Dalit aesthetics. Jadhav brings to focus the specificities of literary culture and how that could or ought to be developed to forge a distinct voice. He reiterates that Dalit literature should focus on the vehicle for communicating experience, making greater use of forms like story-poems. Altaf Husain Hali, a disciple of Ghalib, makes a similar point in '*Muqaddama She'r O Shairi*' illustrating how poetry degenerates through blind imitation, moving away from truth. Hali positions himself at an interesting literary crossroad, partaking of the influences of Arabic, Persian and European Literature, and quoting Milton to elucidate what ought to be the qualities of good poetry. This position leads us to the essay of O. Chandu Menon who wrote one of the earliest novels in Malayalam, *Indulekha*. In the 'Preface to the First Edition of *Indulekha*' Menon describes the process of reconciling a western art form with the indigenous oral story telling mode. Quite interestingly Menon took to the difficult task of writing a Malayalam novel because he found his own translation of an English novel into Malayalam to be unsatisfactory. The Preface highlights some critical issues Indian writers were grappling with, with regard to the transmission of literature from one language to the other and also the use of languages and their conventions which determined the readership of a work. In a recent translation of *Indulekha* by Anitha Devasia, the translator notes how, ironically, Menon's work itself became a victim of unsatisfactory translation for many years. While the first translator (W. Dumergue, 1890) decided it necessary to provide notes to explain the *peculiarities* of Malabar, a chapter (18) deemed unsuitable for the novel was omitted even in a later translation (Leela Devi, 1979).

The two issues that O. Chandu Menon's Preface foregrounds along with the troublesome translation history of *Indulekha* are cross-cultural translation and determining suitable substances for literary writing. Nirmal Verma's essay 'Language and National Identity' is a fairly extensive exposition on language itself which also probes the issue of translation. Citing examples from the *Rig Veda* Verma

cites the untranslatability of certain terms because he perceives that translation cannot be merely literal but bears cultural and philosophical undertones. Hence, he concludes that much of Indian concepts have been mistranslated and misinterpreted in European languages because the European knowledge systems lack those concepts. Thus translation is impossible. According to Verma, what is more pernicious and significant is the extent to which the thoughts of English educated Indians are influenced and governed by the concepts engendered by the English language. Consequently if language enables self-expression, self-realisation, and self-discovery and analysis, then adoption of a foreign language could also lead to alienation from that 'self'.

The 'stuff' of literature is brought to discussion in the essays of Govardhanram Tripathi, Premchand and Mohan Rakesh. In the three essayists one can see the ideological compulsions, determined by their historical location that leads them to formulate what ought to be the concern of literature. Govardhanram Tripathi writes about creating 'a new living force among my countrymen by training them into a higher life' in the epigraph to Part II of his novel *Saraswati Chandra*. Writing towards the end of the nineteenth century, Tripathi's literary ambitions are quite evidently influenced by nationalist impulses, as a counter to colonial propaganda. Premchand's essay, 'The Intent of Literature' states quite unambiguously that literature is 'criticism of life'. The essay was the epoch-making speech that was delivered by Premchand at the Progressive Writers' Association in 1936. The context of the speech and the import suggests the stance that Premchand takes as a writer and his allegiance to socialist realism at this point in history. In the Indian context this is the period when many poets, novelists and playwrights were ideologically inclined to socialism and their work reflected their belief and ideals for a new India. Mohan Rakesh in 'The Novel and Depiction of Reality' (1967) cautions artists against turning their work into vehicles of propaganda. Rakesh opposes idealism to realism and argues that 'long ideological interpretations and explanations' make a work 'a book on a doctrine written in the form of a novel'. Rakesh also clearly visualises a role for the artist in representation of history, particularly contemporary history poised between the old and the new. While he acknowledges the relevance of a universalism in literature he also makes a case for the local and the specific in the creation of powerful literature.

This brings the discussion to Rabindranath Tagore and his essay on 'The Historical Novel'. Tagore probes the rift between history and literature, two modes of representation which cannot coexist according to modern criticism because literature distorts or misrepresents history. Tagore argues that in making 'Truth' and 'Imagination' exclusive categories, with 'Knowledge' as the arbiter, multiple ways of knowing are sacrificed or lost. In the essay Tagore is carrying out the argument about reality and representation that later writers like Premchand and Rakesh have also dealt with, in a very specific area i.e. the historical novel. It is evident that Tagore perceives the limitation of generic categorisation and he takes resource to the ancient Indian concept of *Rasa* to argue his point. He writes that one of the undefined *rasas* is the 'historical *rasa*' and this is the 'life and soul of all epics'. In this manner, Tagore avers, the understanding and appreciation of history is interwoven with the understanding and appreciation of literature in some of the greatest literary works of the Indian civilization.

The volume contains several other important essays as well which readers might like to engage with but could not be discussed here. However, one of the areas that may pose a problem to the serious reader is the organisation of the book. While a chronological arrangement of the essays is convenient, perhaps a thematic clustering of essays would have been more intellectually challenging and satisfactory. It would have enabled the reader to enquire deeper into certain crucial critical concepts that need to be analysed and unpacked if we are to counter the hegemony of western critical apparatus. In this regard two very important essays in this volume are 'Memory and Time' and 'Memory and Country' by S. H. Vatsyayan 'Agyeya' which could be read together with the essays of Nirmal Verma, Rahi Masoom Raza and Mridula Garg among others. There are also bound to be omissions in a book that tries to represent a century and half of writing. However it needs to be said that radical groups of artists/writers like the 'Angaarey' group in Northern India and the 'Kallol' group in Bengal who were quite consciously trying to create a new literary language have been missed in his book, as have been significant feminist writing. Nevertheless, *The Writer as Critic* constitutes a very significant intervention in the writing of Indian literary and critical history.